Living Sermons

AN APOSTLE JOSHUA SELMAN MESSAGE

LESSONS FROM AN OVERCOMER

Destiny-Defining Principles

REVELATION 3:21

"Ignorance is not a demon. You do not solve the problem of ignorance by casting it out. You go for knowledge."

APOSTLE JOSHUA SELMAN

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Lessons from an Overcomer: Destiny-Defining Principles

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FOREWORD

Every overcomer has a story, and behind every story are scars, mistakes and lessons learned at great cost. In this message, ministered at Koinonia in Abuja on November 12, 2023, Apostle Joshua Selman invites the reader to take a seat across from the overcomers of Scripture and of our own day, and to learn from them what they paid dearly to learn.

Part One explains why their stories matter. To overcome is to face, challenge and gain mastery over an enemy, a condition or a situation, and listening to those who have done so redeems time and subsidizes the price of destiny.

Part Two sets out eight destiny-defining principles: ignorance is not a demon; consistent results require defined desires; we are affected less by what happens to us than by the meaning we give it; motivation starts things, but discipline sustains them; we must not be hasty with words or commitments; critics and naysayers both confirm and caution; we must live wisely among wicked, selfish and naive people while never forgetting that sincere people still exist; and only a few things in life are worth dying for.

Part Three adds a closing principle: learn from scars as well as crowns. It ends with what Abraham, David, Solomon, Paul and the greatest Overcomer of all would say to us, a prayer for every reader to become an overcomer, and an altar call. This edition has been prepared from the live transcript; the preacher's words, order and voice have been preserved, and only time stamps, sound cues, songs, announcements and unnecessary repetitions have been removed.

Read it slowly. As the Apostle said, what you are hearing may save you the next ten or twenty years of your life.

Wisdom Epsi
- The Chief Editor, LivingSermons.com

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book is a faithful transcript of a live sermon delivered by the preacher under the inspiration and unction of the Holy Spirit. Every effort has been made to preserve the preacher's exact words, tone, flow, and spiritual authority, while carefully proofreading and formatting the message into a clear and readable ebook format.

The message you are about to read was originally ministered in a live congregational setting. As such, it carries the weight, urgency, and atmosphere of that sacred gathering. Minor grammatical and structural adjustments have been made solely to enhance readability, without altering the substance, intent, or power of the original delivery.

Watch the live sermon from which this message was transcribed on YouTube, **at *Koinonia's Official YouTube Channel***

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MAIN MESSAGE

Begins Here

PART ONE

LEARNING FROM OVERCOMERS

Lessons from an Overcomer

CHAPTER ONE

LESSONS FROM AN OVERCOMER

It is profitable to listen to an overcomer. There is time redemption when you listen to an overcomer.

A DEFINITE VISITATION

WE BLESS YOU. We praise You. We thank You, Majesty. Go ahead and thank Him for the miraculous manifestations of His hand, the doings of the Lord in the midst of His people. Thank Him in advance for what He will be doing in your life tonight.

I want you to ask the Lord to give you a very definite visitation tonight. “Father, there are many people who have gathered in Your name, but visit me this night. Give me a visitation like You gave Sarah. Give me a visitation like You gave Solomon, like You gave Gideon, like You gave Hannah, like You gave the woman at the well, like You gave Nicodemus, like You gave Paul. I cry for a very definite visitation by Your Spirit.” Everyone that asketh receiveth.

In Jesus’ mighty name we have prayed. Father, speak to our hearts tonight. We have come to hear. We have come to receive. We have come to be lifted, to be elevated in the Spirit. We have come to be enlightened and to be empowered. We pray in the name of Jesus that You will find, by Your Spirit, unrestrained

access in our midst, and we pray that You will bless, heal, deliver and transform, and to Jesus be all the glory. Amen and amen.

Can you greet one or two people and then please be seated? Tell them, "God bless you."

THE WORD BEGINS A SEASON

I want to appreciate everyone for your commitment to learn. It is true that without vision the people perish, but it is equally true that without people the vision will not come to fruition. Every God-ordained vision is God-dependent, and it is also people-dependent. The Bible says, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."

Tonight is another opportunity to be radically transformed by the power of His word. I have taught you here that God's method has always been His word. He lifts by His word. He answers prayers by His word. He exalts by His word. He promotes by His word. So when the word of the Lord comes to you, know that its coming has brought the beginning of a new season, and perhaps the end of another. This means that when the word of God is about to come, you must pay rapt attention, so that Satan does not distract you and rob you of your portion.

I truly believe that tonight's teaching will radically transform everyone. I have told you here that I am committed to seeing that week in, week out, when you are gathered here in the name of the Lord, we receive superior wisdom and illumination from God. We learn the ways of the kingdom. We grow in the Spirit by light, and we are prepared to live victorious Christian lives.

THE END OF THE JOURNEY IS GLORY

Let me remind you again, as I have stated times without number: the end of the believer's journey with God is glory. When you begin your walk with God, you must have this at the back of your mind: God's intent for you is not just that you will serve Him, but that your life becomes a manifestation of the glory of God.

If you allow the word of God to mold you, build you, culture you and train you, and if you submit to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it does not matter what your current level is. Believe me when I say this: the end of your life is the glory of God manifest, the glory of God revealed. That means your coming here week in, week out is your commitment to this transformation project. Your coming means you are saying, "I agree with You, O God, that You keep transitioning me, You keep building me, until the glory of God is revealed in experience through my life." May that be your encounter tonight.

Tonight's teaching is also a build-up from last week's teaching. I have been sharing with us keys that help us survive and thrive within this end time. The word speaks of the sons of Issachar: men "that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." It is terrible to be in ignorance as far as the ways of God are concerned. So fasten your seat belts tonight, and please lend me, and lend your destiny, your rapt attention. Those connected from across the globe will do well to invite their loved ones and tell them, "You need to hear what the Apostle has to say. Sit down and learn by the Spirit of God." The Lord will do us good, in Jesus' name.

THREE SCRIPTURES

Lessons from an overcomer. I want to teach you destiny-defining principles today from the lens of Scripture and from the lens of those who have overcome. We are gleaning from the pain of many today. We are gleaning from the tears of many, from the experience of many. For many of you, what you are hearing tonight will save you the next ten or twenty years of your life. Believe me, what you are hearing tonight may save you a lifetime, and many of you will redeem time and gain mastery over destiny.

Three scriptures. Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Not to everybody: "to him that overcometh."

> **2 TIMOTHY 3:14–17**
> *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

Take note of that expression: Scripture is profitable. To what end? "That the man of God may be perfect," mature, "throughly furnished unto all good works."

> **PROVERBS 1:1-5**
> *The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.*

May the Lord grant us grace and understanding, in Jesus' name.

WHO IS AN OVERCOMER?

We live in a world where we admire victorious people. We admire overcomers in sports, in music, in academia, in politics. Every time you see an individual who has succeeded notably in any area, usually he is worthy of our admiration. We have names for them. In our social media age, we look for their pages, like them and follow them religiously, hoping to glean wisdom and be inspired. Generally speaking, in our world, success at any level inspires, and success at any level provokes people to want to replicate the result.

If someone stands here and says, "I am a professor of medicine and surgery," a young aspiring doctor will usually be inspired just by the sight of him. When a young man in the army sees a general, say a four-star general, a very rare position, he will usually be inspired by that sight. Our world celebrates overcomers. We call them all kinds of names. Sometimes we call them celebrities. It is a very wonderful thing to be an overcomer.

Let me give you the definition. To overcome means to confront, to challenge and to prevail over. To overcome also means to gain mastery of. You are called an overcomer to the degree to which you are able to confront, challenge and then prevail over.

Many years ago I used to listen a lot to a genre of music called the music of the masters. Those guys play all kinds of things as though they were not human. Whether the keyboard or whatever they use, they display all kinds of skill. They stretch your imagination beyond its borders. They are called masters. They are overcomers. They spent years learning, and they gained mastery.

Let us define classically who an overcomer is. I have written it down here; please write it. An overcomer is one who faces, challenges, and subdues or gains control over an enemy, a condition or a situation. So the character of an overcomer is that you will be confronted with situations you must face with courage and confidence. You have to challenge them with audacity, and then you subdue them. You overcome. You gain mastery. May that be your testimony from tonight, in the name of Jesus Christ.

THE SECRET OF MEN IS IN THEIR STORIES

Among the many things that make masters, professionals or overcomers admirable are the many stories they tell from their vantage position. You will never meet someone who has truly overcome who does not have a story or a lesson to tell you about the journey. In fact, it is often said that the secret of men is hidden in their stories. When you listen to a great man, one who has achieved any kind of feat or stride in life and destiny, usually in the midst of the stories you find their pain, their lessons and all kinds of secrets which, when you understand them, enable you to reproduce their results.

I repeat: among the many things we gain from overcomers, from victorious people, it is not just the results they now enjoy. It is the lessons and the stories, the gems they found along the way. Can I tell you? To become overcomers, some of these men had to sustain scars and injuries. Some of them made mistakes. Some of them went through things they would not want you to go through again.

It is profitable to listen to an overcomer. There is time redemption when you listen to an overcomer: the capacity to redeem time, the capacity to subsidize the price you have to pay as far as destiny actualization is concerned.

You are about to learn a few destiny-defining principles from the lives of overcomers: overcomers in Scripture and overcomers in our world today. By the Spirit of God, I have been able to distill for you years and decades of pain, years and decades of blood and tears, from people, some dead, some alive, some captured in Scripture, to the end that God will grant us wisdom, and that He will reveal to us through these principles the strategies that empower the saints to survive and to thrive.

TWO SEATS ON A STAGE

Imagine with me that there are two seats here on the stage. One seat is for you; you are seated there. The other is occupied by a very old, ancient man who is talking to you, giving you an opportunity to learn. That is what is happening to you today. The name of the man seated there is Overcomer. Whether you call him Jesus, Paul, Abraham or whatever it is, there is one name that binds them all: they are overcomers, and they are letting us into their lives and into their scars.

PART TWO

EIGHT DESTINY-DEFINING PRINCIPLES

Ignorance Is Not a Demon

Defined Desires

The Meaning We Give

Discipline and Endurance

Slow to Speak, Slow to Commit

Critics and Naysayers

Three Kinds of People

What Is Worth Dying For

CHAPTER TWO

IGNORANCE IS NOT A DEMON

The cure for ignorance is the discipline to stay with light until light drives away darkness.

THE FIRST LESSON

LESSON NUMBER ONE. The first lesson we learn from an overcomer is that ignorance is not a demon. You do not solve the problem of ignorance just by casting it out. You go for knowledge.

There are spirits that encourage an ignorant person to remain in that state, but essentially the starting point for all men is ignorance. All men start in ignorance by default. It is not a negative condition until it is allowed to be prolonged in your life. It is the remaining in ignorance that makes it a problem.

All men begin their journey of destiny in ignorance, including Jesus. The Spirit of God drove Jesus, in Matthew 4, into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. But it was not the Spirit of God that drove Him at age twelve to go to the temple. As an act of His will He went to the temple and invested time. Aware of His ignorance, He began to do something about it. Jesus was not the only young man in His day, but He was one of the few who dedicated themselves to learning.

NO FAST FIX

Many believers want a short-term, fast-fix solution to the issue of ignorance. Most church people, especially in Africa, believe that with one prophetic declaration ignorance will suddenly evaporate out of their minds, leaving them with superior wisdom. It does not happen like that. The cure for ignorance is not just prayer. The cure for ignorance is not just deliverance. The cure for ignorance is the discipline to stay with light until light drives away darkness.

Many people today, including men and women of God in ministry, family people and aspiring people in our world, are left at the mercy of their ignorance. They continue to fail and to recycle pain perpetually, bringing all kinds of flimsy excuses and justifications, and many of them have invented all kinds of imbalanced strategies to deal with their ignorance. First and foremost, many will not even admit that they are in ignorance.

Can I tell you? A real miracle begins at the point where you are aware of your state of ignorance. Even if you do not yet know the way out, the awareness that "I am in a state of ignorance" already begins to put you in a position of victory. For as long as you live, I want you to know this: ignorance is not a demon. All men, including the ones you call overcomers, started from a standpoint of ignorance.

STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED

2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Can you imagine that receiving approval from God, as far as destiny actualization is concerned, has a dimension that only study can bring? There is a relationship between laziness and shame. The Bible says study to show yourself approved, and that in doing so there will be no need for shame.

Proverbs 1, from verse 20. Please be patient as I read while you learn. “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?” The word “simple” there means ignorant: will you love ignorance?

“Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” Wisdom is speaking. “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.”

The consequences of ignorance: “When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

Ignorance is not a demon. Ladies and gentlemen, please hear me: if you want to actualize destiny and live a victorious life, you must learn to take responsibility by the Spirit and contend for high levels of spiritual illumination.

THE FALLACY OF SHORT-TERM SUCCESS

Another angle to this first point is that being enlightened in one area does not cover for the darkness in another area. Every area must be uniquely pursued to get light. You may have light in the area of healing, but it will not bring you prosperity by default. You must pay attention to all the various dimensions of your life and pursue light in every one of them.

Herein lies the fallacy of short-term success. You can excel in one area, and results have a way of flattering us. In the presence of results in one area, it is difficult to admit that you are ignorant in another. After all, you have results. You may be an excellent preacher, but a bad leader. Because of the results you get in preaching, you come to a point where it is difficult to admit that you need leadership built into you, because you judge by the sincerity of your priesthood and automatically assume, "Because I preach and people are blessed, it means I am an exceptional leader." You can be a responsible father in your willingness to help your children, yet ignorant of the principles that make you a father indeed.

Dimensional success is dangerous, because you excel in one area and believe that, because of the excellence in that area, there is no need for improvement or development in any other area. I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 8:2, a very profound scripture: "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

For you to excel in life, you must come to terms with the fact that you will not be spoon-fed the light, the knowledge and the information you need to rise and thrive. You have to challenge yourself and rise to the occasion. It will take a long time to gain knowledge.

THREE AND A HALF YEARS TO ONE DAY

Listen. It took one day for the Holy Spirit to come upon the apostles, but it did not take one day for them to be transformed and prepared for that impartation. The ratio of transformation to impartation was three and a half years to one day. There was one day of Pentecost, but there was no one day of lectures. There were years of lectures: Jesus teaching them, helping them, allowing them to ask questions, until they were prepared.

I have taught you here in Koinonia that the value of the anointing is that it comes upon a vessel that is enlightened and transformed. When you try to bring impartation upon a life, a vessel that rejects enlightenment and transformation, you only waste that impartation. It will profit nothing.

SPIRITS ARE OPPORTUNISTS

Ignorance is not a demon. “This finance thing: why is it not working? The devil must be attacking me.” I have told you that spirits are opportunists. They have found a loophole in your understanding and built a stronghold around it. I can tell you, no spirit is as powerful as it looks. It is the gap, the space that our ignorance has provided in our lives. For as long as demons find the vessel swept but empty, they will always call their kind and make the latter state worse than the first.

When I found this out, I made up my mind that I would not blame anybody for anything that does not work in my life. I will take responsibility before God and sit down. Remember my teaching last week: the first lesson we learned from overcomers is that there are people who take responsibility to contend for light.

How do you know light has come? By the absence of darkness. If darkness is still there, you do not have enough light. Write it down, please: the ultimate test of the presence of light is the absence, the dispelling, of darkness.

THE LAWS OF THE COSMOS

Many believers are plagued with the cancer of ignorance: ignorance of the ways of the kingdom, ignorance of the laws of the cosmos. I hope you know that this universe was not designed by an intelligent God to be run on blind ideas. There are exact laws: spiritual laws, but also exact natural laws. You find these laws scattered in biology, in agriculture, in engineering. All those we call scientists today are men who have stumbled across the laws God created to govern the activities of the cosmos.

There are laws that control the realm of the Spirit, but there are also laws that control the earth. For instance, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest… shall not cease." That is not a spiritual law alone; it is a law that applies to all men. There are certain principles that apply only to believers, but there are principles that apply to all men: the laws of the universe. My question is: how many of them do you not know, and of how many of them are you currently a victim?

Lessons from an overcomer: ignorance is not a demon. That means everybody has a chance to get out of the realm of ignorance as quickly as his passion can afford. You must take responsibility and say, "In the name of Jesus, I am tired of wallowing in this ignorance."

You came from a family where no one has risen: no glory, no beauty. I can tell you, for as long as you keep blaming people and hoping, as we say in Nigeria, "one day e go better," it will not work. That is a saying without any biblical basis. Time does not change things. Time only reveals.

BEHIND EVERYTHING THAT WORKS IS LIGHT

The day you begin to take responsibility over your life and destiny, obtaining grace and assistance from the Spirit, and you go through the labor of contending for light, you are subscribing to your exit from the realm of shame, the realm of mediocrity, the realm where nothing seems to work.

Behind everything that works is light. Light is the battery that powers everything that works. Behind every great business is information that the owner of that business knows. Behind every great ministry, I tell you sincerely, there are secrets. Men rise and stand upon the abundance of the secrets, the mysteries and the principles they have found.

There are laws that govern the anointing. There are laws that govern leadership, influence, abundance, relationships and restoration. There are laws that govern longevity. It is your assignment under God to find these laws by the Spirit.

Can I tell you, and I say this with every sense of humility: happy are you when God plants you under a man of God who, by sacrifice, has distilled these laws and brings them to you cheaply. He has subsidized the price you have to pay. This is the blessing you get when you come to the house of God: people have paid the price, by the Spirit and through the sacrifice of alignment, the labor of mentorship and the sacrifice of adaptation, to get these truths together, distill them and communicate them with grace.

A REALM WHERE IGNORANCE IS NOT PERMITTED

Lessons from an overcomer: there is no overcomer who sits on the throne of glory in ignorance. There is a realm where ignorance is not permitted. The gate will not open. Even the worst of men in that realm is sufficiently knowledgeable. There is a realm beyond which ignorance cannot pass.

It is up to you, listening to me here and across the globe, to make up your mind right now whether you are ready to remain. Did you know that regardless of the prophetic word that comes year after year, and regardless of the resolutions you make year after year, if you remain in ignorance your lot is already defined? I do not need to be a prophet to reveal what your tomorrow will be. Just show me the abundance of ignorance you have decided to keep, and with the precision of an artist I can paint your tomorrow: not by word of knowledge.

There are many people whose ten years from now will look like today; in fact, worse than today. It is not prophesying doom. It is that the level of emotional attachment they have to ignorance will not allow them to rise. They are so attached to ignorance that they dread the discipline of knowledge.

The first lesson the overcomers are teaching us tonight is that ignorance is not a demon. It does not respond to sentiments. It does not respond to all kinds of prejudices. You must be willing and ready to contend for light. High-level spiritual illumination is what cures darkness in your life.

CHAPTER THREE

DEFINED DESIRES

You cannot have consistent results until your desires and expectations are defined.

THE SECOND LESSON

WHAT IS THE SECOND lesson we learn tonight from an overcomer? You cannot have consistent results until your desires and expectations are defined. Please underline the word "defined."

Luke 18:39–41: "And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"

Jesus, the Overcomer, asked the man a question: "What do you want Me to do for you? I am a compendium of limitless possibilities, but My response to you will be at the instance of your defining your desire." The man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." The man could have said, "Help me talk to the king, so that they give me alms every day." Just because you see someone in a state does not mean he is willing to come out of it. Giving definition to your desires coordinates the power of God to meet you at the point of your need.

WHAT THINGS SOEVER YE DESIRE

Mark 11:24. Please pay attention to what you are learning now. “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” What things: specific things.

I will tell you why many people never become successful. I will tell you why many people never actualize great things in life: they have no definition over their desires. They have vague ideas. Ask an average person, “What do you want God to do for you?” and he will say something like, “Maybe general goodness, just to show up for me.”

Or ask, “What is wrong with you?” The first assignment of every doctor is not treatment; it is to diagnose the problem, and diagnosis can take a long time. They need to send you to run a test, and the result can show multiple possibilities. Then they subject you to a more intricate test, and the joy of the doctor is that he finally zooms in. People begin to rejoice over diagnosis, not just treatment. They are finally happy that the problem has a name. The moment it has a name, your chances are high that you will be healed and survive. Ask any medical practitioner: the worst state any doctor can be in is trying to treat a patient whose condition has no definition.

That is true for medicine, and it is also true for your life. What kind of believer do you want to become? “I just want to love God.” That is vague. “I just want to be great.” That is vague. “I hate poverty.” That is still vague. “I want to be rich.” That is vague. “I want to be a big man.” Very vague, ignorantly vague, because “big man” is an expression that was not even introduced by big men.

You cannot have consistent results until your desires and expectations are defined. Giving definition to your desires is a miracle. I can tell you this: in this area, religion, science and psychology come together. They all agree that your life will rise higher when there is definition to your expectations. “What wilt

thou?" "That I may receive my sight." When your desires are defined, you will know when the goals have been achieved.

"Lord, bring increase." What does that mean? How will you know your prayer has been answered? "Lord, take away shame from my life." By what definition will you know shame has left? How will you know God has answered you, and how will you know the devil is resisting the prayer? "Lord, let my destiny helpers send for me." That is wonderful, but what is the definition? We pray generally, and you hear me prophesy generally, but when it comes to the life of a victorious one, an overcomer, ladies and gentlemen, there needs to be definition in your life.

SEVEN AREAS OF SUCCESS

Most believers want to succeed, but they are totally at a loss as to what success is and what indices they will use to measure it. I have helped you in this house, and I will help you again: when you talk about success, there are about seven areas, and if you do not excel in them, you are not successful. Let me do a one-minute recap for you; please write it down. We are still on point two.

Number one: your spiritual growth. The first area in which you measure success, if you want to make progress and advance, is your spiritual growth.

Number two: mental transformation. You are successful to the degree to which you adopt superior belief systems that translate into a winning and victorious life. I refer you to my message "The Victor Mentality." There is nothing called a billionaire madman. If you give a madman one billion, you have not helped him. He is not even aware of it, because he is not in a mental state that is fine and healthy.

Number three: purpose. You can call it your ambition, your career, whatever it is: that which you desire to do as far as life and destiny are concerned.

Number four: your health and wellness. You are only successful in the kingdom to the degree to which you are healthy and well. Your physical agility and your wellness are very potent indices for measuring success.

I am teaching you this so that when you say, "Lord, I desire to be successful," you understand the areas, and your mind can cooperate with your prayer, so that you get answers and know when God has answered you.

Number five: your financial well-being. Usually this is where most people zoom in when they talk about success; they are really talking about money. It is true that, in all of you being successful, if you lag in this area you are not wholesomely, entirely successful.

Number six: relationships. The sixth area that measures and defines your success is the quality of the relationships you have and enjoy in your life. From an earthly standpoint, you are as secure as the relationships you have.

Number seven: fulfillment and meaning. That is: m-e-a-n-i-n-g. The area of fulfillment and meaning, where you want to ensure that your life counts, that you are satisfied knowing you are serving God and becoming a blessing to humanity.

FIND THE SOURCE OF THE LEAK

You cannot have consistent results until your desires and expectations are defined. Watch this. Let me use a plumbing issue. Say you have a leak in a pipe. The water can start from the toilet or the bathroom, flow down to the bedroom, and may even flow into your living room. When you are solving the problem, the place where the water is, is not the place to fix. You have to go back and find the point from which the leak started. It was the longevity of the leak that caused the damage to reach your living room.

So you go past the living room and finally get to the point where you say, "Ah, so it is from the toilet," or the sink, and you start fixing it there. When you fix that,

you can clean up the water and know you have done a good job. But when you leave the part that is still leaking and try to mop up the water in the living room, you have only wasted your time.

There are many, many people just trying to mop up problems, bringing temporary solutions. They have not yet brought definition to their desires. There are believers who want empowerment from God but have no clear definition.

WE THINK IN PICTURES

We think in pictures. That is why you hear a lot of people tell you they keep images that represent their future. When that is done within the limits of Scripture, it is fine.

Now you understand why the Lord gave me the instruction to get the map of Abuja, the map of Nigeria, the map of Africa and the map of the globe. Why would God ask me to do that? I was in a season of intense prayer, praying for the next level of Koinonia, and God did not even start by revealing to me where we would be meeting. He just said, "Go and get the map."

No wonder He told Abraham, "Come out. Look toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them." It was as if He said, "You are asking Me to bless you, but there is vagueness. There is no definition. I need to help your imagination, so that I can release to you, and you can understand, what I have in store." He said, "Count the stars," and Abraham began to count and was lost, and God said, "So shall thy seed be." Verse 6: "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

There are things God wants to do. This is why, my dear people, I believe in the power of dreams and visions. It is God's way of helping to prepare your mind. When you have seen something and held it in your imagination, it becomes difficult for the devil to steal it from you.

So a young lady from a poor and mediocre family comes to Koinonia and receives a prophetic word. She goes back home, and here comes the Spirit of grace. She sits down and sees herself standing on a crusade ground, ministering, for instance, or running a multinational NGO, blessing people. Then she wakes up: "I am still in that room. I am still on the ground." You are not there. You have left that place; you are just not aware. You do not know the power of it. I am not just playing with your mind. Because you were able to receive it, you are no longer in that condition. It will just take time for your body to get where your mind has gotten to. I can tell you that at the instant you received it… The moment Mary said, "Be it unto me according to thy word," she became pregnant.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR NUMBERS?

Consultants who teach people how to plan, in the area of finances for instance, will usually tell you, "Go and calculate how much it takes to run your family per week." And you see the person who is praying, crying and shouting: "I do not know." "How much are your children's school fees?" "The last time I checked, I think it was around seventy or eighty." You cannot rise that way. "How much is your rent?" "I do not know." "How much is your transportation?" "I do not know. God, help me." And God says, "What do you want Me to do for you? How can I touch a destiny helper to help you?"

That is why, if God gives such a person one or two million, he will rejoice and roll on the ground, and in two weeks he is back to his former self, because there was no definition of desires. There will always be a wastage of opportunities when there is no definition to your desires.

I truly believe that part of the reason Joseph excelled was that he prepared. He knew that, by the law of time and chance, one day he would stand before the king. It might take long; there was no guarantee; no date was given to him. And I am saying this prophetically to someone: do you know you are closer to

meeting your helpers? Are you prepared? Have you imagined yourself in the boardroom? Or do you want to wait until the day God opens the door, and then disgrace yourself and your destiny through a lack of definition?

A STICK FOR A MICROPHONE

Let me tell you: many years ago, a much younger version of myself, back in our family house in Jos, used to go to our boys' quarters at night. You have heard my story. I would carry a stick representing a microphone and shout at the back of that house, preaching alone. I never knew that my mother once peeped and saw me doing it. And I would sense the power of God. I was preaching there in the bush. It is true.

Let me sincerely admit to you: if you do not have a definition for your desires, they will never come to pass. I hate to be the bearer of bad news. "Oh, I am going to be a great man of God." Do you have individuals who represent where you are going? "Oh, I will be greater than anybody." Be like them first; then you can be greater than them. Some of these foolish and blind strategies are the reason people do not rise. "I am going to be greater than…" Have an idea. "I am going to be a great crusader." There are a few people who can be a starting point to prime your creativity: Reinhard Bonnke of blessed memory, Billy Graham of blessed memory. At every level there is someone who can relate to your desires.

SPELL OUT YOUR GOALS

Lessons from an overcomer: you must give definition to your desire. You will see someone living in one room who has already asked an architect friend, "Help me draw a three-bedroom flat." The man says, "Well, I will draw it, but I know you are wasting your time." No. He draws it and writes it there.

Or some people will spell out their goals: "In the name of Jesus, by the end of 2023 I should be worth at least ten million naira." It may not be much; at whatever level, someone may laugh at you and say, "Just that?" No problem.

Allow them. Just keep dreaming with God. “In the name of Jesus, as a man of God, by the end of the year I should have the privilege of serving His grace to these people and this region.” Planning is powerful, and there is no planning without deploying your imagination.

Listen, I want you to respect what you are hearing. Believe me, even from an intellectual standpoint, you would not hear what you are hearing without paying a price. I assure you: ask any consultant, any intelligent person. What you are hearing for free is what people pay tens of thousands of dollars and travel to seminars to listen to. I pray and hope that you respect it.

Lesson number two from an overcomer: when there is no definition to your desires, there is no sustainable success.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MEANING WE GIVE

People are not really affected by what happens to them. They are affected by the meaning they give to what happens to them.

THE THIRD LESSON

LESSON NUMBER THREE. Listen, and then write it down: people are not really affected by what happens to them. They are affected by the meaning, the definition and the interpretation they attach to what happens to them. It is not what happens to people that affects them. It is the meaning they give to what happens to them that causes the pain and the despair.

Please look up; do not worry, you will write. What is the difference between falling in church and falling in a restaurant? Young lady, if, as I am teaching right now, the power of God carries you up and lands you down, you get up rejoicing, and even your sister says, “My God, He has visited you.” Versus falling down in a restaurant, even if the fall here was worse. What is the difference? It is not the falling down. It is the meaning you attach to the experience. That is what causes depression, and that is what causes joy.

It is never what happens to you that has the power to destroy you. You have associated happenings in your life with certain meanings. There are events that mean failure to you. There are events that mean weakness to you. There are events that mean oppression to you. What makes someone cry is another person’s desire. Someone will cry and say, “I got only one million.” That is a

meaning you connected to it: based on your level, one million is a testimony of failure. Whereas someone else would talk about that one million as though he had just arrived in heaven.

Now please write: people are not really affected by what happens to them. They are affected by the meaning they connect to those happenings.

COMFORT CHANGES MEANING

This is why comfort and counseling are powerful. What happens when you are comforted? What happens when you are counseled? Your perceptions are being changed. That is all. The situation is not necessarily being solved; your perception is.

Let me use something more bearable. You lose a job, and you get angrier and angrier. Someone sits down with you and says, "Do you know that perhaps… The Bible says all things work together for good. Is that true?" Watch what is happening to you now. The person says, "I know the story of someone who lost a job and did not know it was a springboard to the next level." At the end of it, the person who was crying ten minutes ago is suddenly rejoicing. Did you give the person a job? No. You changed the meaning associated with the situation. Can I tell you? When you learn this principle, you can laugh through storms.

What happens when you post a video and get only two likes, two follows? Why do you cry about all of this? "Can you imagine? I suffered to preach this message, and only two people!" Are you sure it was only two people? What if the first click was a whole congregation listening to you? But you have assigned a meaning.

People are not really affected by what happens to them, I assure you. Why do you hate to let people know that your father, with all due respect, does some menial job, so that you lie and call him your uncle: "No, that is my uncle. My real father is abroad"? Why tell that lie? It is not necessarily because you are a

bad person. There is a meaning: you feel that if you reveal the true status of your father in that lowly estate, it may affect people's perception of your self-worth, and you will lose your sense of significance. That means a secure believer is one who redefines the meanings he has associated with many things in his life.

EGO IS AN INDUSTRY

It is truly not what happens to you that destroys you. "You just called me Joshua Selman, not Apostle Joshua Selman. Do you know who I am?" What is the meaning of that? Perhaps in that culture they feel it is fine to just say "Joshua Selman," and you say, "You will soon know that God called me." All that complaint, simply because "Apostle" was missing. No: it is a meaning you have connected to it.

There are people who are so insecure that if a little child taps their leg and says "Uncle," they will slap him, because they are used to respect: "How dare you tap my feet, you little boy? You do not know who I am." Why would a man pound on his wife, slapping her and saying, "Do you know I am older than you?" That should be obvious. Why would the woman take revenge and say, "You will stay without food tonight"? At the end of all that drama, they are simply stinging each other's ego, because of meaning.

Lessons from an overcomer, number three: we are not really affected by what happens to us. It is the definition and the meaning we associate with it. Another word for it is ego. Ego is an industry. There are businesses literally built on this deficiency in men.

If you watch me come down from a car, and it is a nice jeep or a Lincoln Navigator, that is fine. But if I come out of a Golf, you say, "No, no, no, this should not be." There are people who stand in front of aircraft they have never entered, and may never enter soon, take a snap and say, "To God be the glory, I just arrived." Why? I am not trying to be sarcastic. But why do we go through

this pressure? “That house you see is my own.” In fact, I do not want to say much. And everything is “to God be the glory.” But the truth is, we hope that by some meaning, even if it is by falsehood, we will earn respect: that people will believe we are serious people, maybe wealthy, and so on.

Can I tell you? When you learn to give things proper meanings, offense will be minimized in your life. The direct consequence of violating this principle is that you will live a life of unnecessary pain and offense. Someone can be looking at you while thinking about his rent, and you will think the person is eyeing you: “I have noticed that this person is eyeing me.” Honestly, the person is not even there. He is thinking about what explanation he will give the landlord, and you are there misunderstanding him and looking at him through the lens of your insecurity.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCIPLINE AND ENDURANCE

You need motivation to start anything, but it takes discipline and endurance to be consistent.

THE FOURTH LESSON

NUMBER FOUR. What lesson do we learn tonight from an overcomer? You need encouragement, or motivation, to start anything, but it takes discipline and endurance to be consistent.

When you are about to start anything, what you need is encouragement and motivation. But it will take discipline and endurance to be consistent in life. The secret of starting is motivation, but the secret of remaining, of being consistent, is discipline and endurance. You need encouragement and motivation to start a business, a ministry or a home. But everyone who has stayed in any field of success will tell you that you get to a point where you need more than motivation. It will take discipline, and it will take endurance.

TWO DIMENSIONS OF DISCIPLINE

Talking about discipline, there are two dimensions to it. Number one is staying power. Number two is the power of restraint. You need both. You are not disciplined if you do not have number one, the staying power, the ability to continue, even if alone. And you are not disciplined without number two, the ability to say no to many good things.

Believers, please listen to me; this is a very profound point. Most people think that those we call overcomers today, champions in the Spirit and in destiny, were carried all the way by motivation. I disagree totally. Go and ask any champion in any field. There are times when motivation will not solve the kind of challenge before you. You need the staying power to continue, even if you do not know the name of what you are doing.

Motivate me to go to Lagos by road. You can encourage me when I start. By the time I am seven hours in, do not motivate me; you are wasting your time. Pray for me for the staying power to remain in that car until I arrive. We have a world so in need of motivation. Motivation is important; do not get me wrong. It helps to prime you to start. But there are times you will need to stand alone and say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

AFTER HE HAD PATIENTLY ENDURED

Hebrews 6:15. Many people lack staying power. "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." Abraham did not obtain the promise just because God said it. It took patience; it took endurance.

Can I tell you the truth? For some of you, by reason of what I am saying, God is telling you, "Go back to what you were doing. It is still My will. Stay there." It will not happen magically. We have this idea that because you are in the will of God, the results will happen overnight. No, sir. There are times you will cry and still be in the will of God. There are times it will not make sense, and you will

still be in the will of God. This stubborn child: was it a curse to get you? He is still a pastor; train him. Endure.

A gentleman heard that I had prayed for seventy-two hours. You know these guys who get motivated (and that is wonderful; it is good to inspire people). He sent a text saying he was going to challenge himself to go past seventy-two hours. Of course, there are many ways to learn. When you hear it, you think it is easy. I assure you, by experience, by the time you pass four or five hours, there has to be a grace that carries you through. There is absolutely nothing that will motivate you about that experience again. If you do not know this, you are not a person of prayer. Even if the Holy Ghost is shaking all the chairs in your room, I assure you it is discipline that will drive you through.

THE LAW OF PROCESS

The staying power. For somebody, you are about to veer off the path of destiny, whereas the path you have taken is the right path. You just need to remain. If you are traveling, again in my example, from Abuja to Lagos, even by air, it would be unwise after fifteen minutes to start shouting at the crew or the pilot: "I thought this flight was supposed to be a fast one!" No. You will have to endure.

How do you endure? Sometimes you do nothing. You just sit down until you arrive. There are times you have to drive, if you are the one driving, or fly, if you are the pilot in charge. But there are times when you do not need to do anything. It is called staying power: the ability to remain until the law of process runs its course in your life.

Those who are good in the kitchen know this. There are times you have mixed everything, and there is nothing else to do but close the pot and wait. Have you tried to taste food while it is still on the fire, wanting to pick out a piece of meat by force? Because of impatience you will burn your tongue, and out of shock you may knock the whole pot of food down. That is what happens to people.

Impatience has cheated many people out of actualizing their destiny. Just wait thirty more minutes, and the food is yours. You can roam around the kitchen, but wait. You can be hungry, but wait. Watch videos of food, but wait. Once the meal is ready, it is served beautifully, and you can sit down and take your time to enjoy it.

Say, "In the name of Jesus, I receive grace to wait. I receive grace to stay. I receive grace to stand. I receive grace to be disciplined."

ONE MILLION IS ONE PLUS ONE

Do you know that one million is one plus one plus one, all the way to a million? There are many people who want to save, and their target is two million naira. When they get to seven hundred thousand, one day they get angry and say, "Look, it is only when I am alive that I can get to two million," and they convince themselves with all kinds of things. Usually they keep the money where they can easily reach it, so they just reach in and pull out whatever is there. One day you put your hand in and find nothing, and you say, "Who stole it?" No. It was carelessness and indiscipline that finished that money. Just because you do not know what you did with it does not mean you did not use it. People will say their money is disappearing. There are real cases like that, but in most cases it is a lie. It is just the carelessness of the individual.

SAY NO TO GOOD THINGS

You need encouragement and motivation to start, but it will take discipline and endurance. Listen, I wrote this here: you must learn to say no to many good things if you desire greatness. We have been taught that you say no only to evil things. No. There are many good things in your life that you must sustain the courage to say no to.

Have you seen someone running a race, a real race, say the finals of a marathon, with just two or three more laps to go, and someone dangles some ice cream

and says, “Remember, you like ice cream”? Is ice cream wrong? No. But with respect to what you are doing, it is a distraction.

Can I tell you? If the devil uses evil things to get you and you resist, he will use good things. What matters to him is that you go down, whether by good or by evil. There is a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Both good and evil are connected to that tree, and it has one assignment: to destroy you. Many things in your life are not just about good or bad; they are about wise or unwise. There are many things that may be good but may not be wisdom for you, with respect to the making that is happening to you.

So you must learn from an overcomer that the great are people who master the art of staying, even in their tears.

BEYOND MOTIVATION

When a woman announces that she is pregnant, people usually celebrate her, especially if she has trusted God for a while: “This is beautiful; we are happy to know this.” Five months, six months: you find that no matter what you say, it does not bring the laughter it brought in months one and two, because at that point what she needs is not motivation. It is staying power. She will complain, but the baby is still there. She will argue with her husband, but the baby is still there, until she finally gives birth and everybody comes to rejoice. And sometimes she will even say, “This is the last time.”

Getting angry that there is nobody encouraging you is a joke. They encouraged you when you were launching, cutting the ribbon of that pharmacy. Now that no one is buying the drugs, now that people are not coming, you do not need motivation. You need encouragement by the Spirit, and sometimes it does not come just by someone saying, “Go forward.” It is discipline: remain. Do not give up. Remain. This goes beyond motivation, beyond positive speaking. You just need to stay until it happens.

I am praying for someone who is weary and weak in ministry, in life and in destiny, as a parent, as a student. It looks as if you have stretched yourself and come to your wits' end. In the name of Jesus, the Son of the living God, the staying power, the enduring grace that causes men to remain until they manifest: may it rest upon you now.

CHAPTER SIX

SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO COMMIT

Patience is a virtue that forces deception to reveal itself.

THE FIFTH LESSON

NUMBER FIVE. Do not be hasty with words or with commitments. Think, pray and seek counsel before making destiny-defining decisions.

I will take it again slowly. This is the fifth lesson we learn from an overcomer. Put this down first: do not be hasty with words, and do not be hasty with commitments. Then: think, pray and seek counsel before making destiny-defining decisions. This is a profound truth.

By the grace of God, I have studied many successful people, especially within the body of Christ and in ministry, and I found that the older they get, the more value they place on their words. Have you noticed that people speak faster when they are younger? The aged treasure their words, and sometimes they can be silent for a very long time, but in their silence they are processing a lot of things. Young people are full of zeal; they can shout and say a thousand words, then find out they made a mistake they cannot recall.

Do not be hasty with words. The Bible says even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise. Many of us today have committed ourselves to lives, things and

people, to our pain, because if only we had been a bit patient, we would have made better decisions.

IN THE PRESENCE OF INTEREST, EVERYONE IS A SAINT

Now let me explain a bit. I wrote here that humans are largely interest-motivated and self-centered. You need to know this. That means that in your entire lifetime you can literally count on the palms of your hands the number of people who will come to participate in your life and destiny without expecting anything in return.

Humans are largely interest-motivated and self-centered, and nothing is exactly wrong with that, except for the fact, as you will be learning further, that because humans are self-centered, in the presence of interest everyone is a saint. Did you hear what I said? In the presence of interest, everybody is a saint. Meaning: provided I can see how I benefit from this process, I will usually be at my best. In truth, it is when people become aware that their expectations have been disappointed that you truly know who they are.

UP TO HALF OF MY KINGDOM

Do not be hasty with words. Do not be hasty with commitments. As I said last week, there are people who have made commitments, even in church, and they were hasty to make them, and now it is to their detriment and their peril.

If only Herod had been patient, he would not have made such a costly statement, telling the girl, “Because you have danced, ask whatsoever thou wilt, unto the half of my kingdom.” How could he say that? The girl went and consulted, and they said, “Beautiful: ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” And because he was a king and he had spoken…

There are many of you who made hasty statements: “I will sponsor ten of you from primary school to university,” and a camera caught it. We live in a social

media age. After five years someone comes to review your commitment: "Sorry, sir, just to remind you that you are the philanthropist we knew five years ago, who promised these people that you would pay their school fees for the rest of their lives." And now you are trapped in something you do not have the capacity to sustain. Before destiny-defining decisions: pray, think, and then consult with wise people. This is what made ordinary people become overcomers. They were not hasty with words.

JESUS WROTE ON THE GROUND

Remember the story of the woman brought to Jesus, the woman caught in adultery, the Bible says, in the very act. The people said, "You claim that You were sent from God. This woman has been caught in adultery. What do You have to say?"

Watch Jesus, the Overcomer, the Wise. The Bible says He stooped down and wrote on the ground. I am sure the people were impatient, boiling, hoping to trap Him. If I were Jesus, I am sure they would have caught me immediately. Maybe that is where they would have crucified me, because of careless statements, and I would not have died a savior; I would have died a loser.

He kept quiet and wrote, and then He looked up, and from the residue of wisdom He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." End of discussion. And what was the effect of such wisdom? The Bible says they were convicted, "beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." What kind of word was that? Their consciences were put under arrest with one sentence, ladies and gentlemen, from the oldest (because the older you are, the more you need repentance and forgiveness) to the youngest. They left, and the woman was standing there alone. He said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." That was it.

WHEN PEOPLE RUSH YOU

There are many times, before you make a business decision… Can I tell you? The moment people want to rush you, there is most likely deception around the corner. Let me give you this as a powerful secret. "Just sign. Do not worry; you will read it tomorrow. Just sign. Is it not me? You do not trust me again? Are we not from the same village?" Tell them, "Please…" There are few things that demand that kind of urgency. Very few things: maybe life-and-death issues, I can agree. But most cases are not life and death. It is just deception.

So you sign something, and they say "Thank you," and you know that sometimes, when people are about to deceive, they are very polite and nice: "Do not worry, we are fine." As soon as you sign it and stamp it, you realize you have just signed that thirty percent of everything you earn will go to that company, whether you have left them or not.

Can you imagine a construction company comes, and because they are trying to give you something, you sign and stamp, and it says that if you leave the construction company and sell the house to someone else, even to the tenth person who occupies the house, you will still be remitting to the original company? You did not look at it; you just signed. After five years they come with a lawyer and your signature, and you will argue and argue and still pay.

In the name of Jesus, whatever wants to rush you unnecessarily… God gives speed, but He does not rush men. Please listen to me: God gives speed, but He does not rush people unnecessarily.

EVEN A PRISON HAS A DOOR

This is also true for ministry. Do not feel you are too anointed to wait for God, commission yourself and crash-land for nothing. Beware of those who deceive you and say, "Look, you are too anointed to be in this state. You are still a prayer warrior in the prayer department? If I had half of your anointing, I would be a general overseer." And you say, "Really?" "I even have an extra auditorium; we can start from there."

That reminds me of what happened after the first crusade in this ministry. True story. We usually held our crusades in collaboration with the PFN. It was a small crusade, but quite a phenomenal one, and after it, a few pastors called me and said, "Look, would you want to come and establish a branch of your ministry here?" God is my witness, it looked very tempting. They were sincere people. They said, "No, no, with this kind of result, I think you should be here."

I told them, "Let me go to the Lord and inquire of Him." I remember, and I will use the direct words: the Lord told me that if I did that, I would die. He was not cursing me. Looking back with hindsight now, at the level of ignorance I had in my life at that time, if I had made the mistake of branching out, it would have been a disaster, to my peril.

In 2013, I think it was, remember the vision I saw: a plane with the name of the ministry written on it, about to land in Abuja, and it crashed. I knew it was in the will of God to come here, but it was not yet the timing.

I submit to you, by the Spirit of God (and some of the people who did this are watching now): there are people who have opened offices for me across a number of nations, and by the Spirit of God I politely requested, "Please, I appreciate your zeal. I know you are taking a step, and I appreciate your initiative, but can you help me close it?"

Can you look at open doors and still know that this may not be God who opened them? I have told you that you enter even a prison through an open door. It takes an open door to be in jail. So when a door is open, verify where you are going first, so that you do not find yourself in a prison, because even a prison has a door.

LET ME THINK ABOUT IT

Do not be hasty with words. There are times you need to tell people, "All right, no problem. Please, can you allow me a day? Let me think about it." And sometimes, in the place of prayer, the Holy Spirit will tell you, "Call So-and-so. Call So-and-so."

There are many people, with all due respect, who have been scammed because they were hasty with commitments. You saw some email (you know most of these boys who do all those things): "You have won twenty million US dollars." And the devil will program it to arrive immediately after a miracle service, and you will just believe it. You see, this is why ignorance is not good. God does not bless people that way. There is a system for growth: line upon line, precept upon precept. If you have not managed one hundred thousand with dignity, God will never give you a billion just like that. He loves you too much to kill you.

Have you ever been blessed in a way that you became afraid of what you had? You suspect yourself. You suspect your wife. You suspect your children. The way you are behaving, people know something has happened in your life, because you are not normal anymore. You are not used to that realm; you did not grow into it. "Why is this door suddenly locked? What is your business?" "Ah, no, something must be there."

I release grace upon you not to be hasty in making commitments, in the name of Jesus Christ: joining associations, joining clubs, becoming part of whatever, even relocating, moving from one region to another. Perhaps you were in an area of Abuja that was manageable; your budget was fair and fine. Someone just

tells you, “There is an opportunity here. I can support you for the first year.” How about the other years? You did not think about it.

There are times you maximize moments. But can I tell you? You are never disadvantaged if you have to pray before you act. You are never disadvantaged if you have to seek counsel before you act. Even if, in the process of praying, thinking and seeking counsel, you miss that opportunity, I can tell you that God, for His name’s sake, will recycle another season to honor you again. This is God for you.

COUNT THE COST

Someone comes and says, “I want to marry you.” You find out nothing. You do not pray. “I want to marry you, but I come from a family of witches and wizards.” “No problem.” “Look, I am supposed to be the next priest.” “It does not matter.” And you do not think: what am I getting into? Do I have the stamina to stand against those forces? I can tell you that you can be victorious, but it is important to count the cost. “I am the only Christian out of thirty people. We are forty-three in our family; I am number thirty-nine.” “No problem. I still love you like that.” Most people do not think. I hope you get what I am telling you. People make all kinds of rushed and careless decisions, and they may have to spend their lifetime paying the price.

Say, “In the name of Jesus, I obtain grace to pray, grace to think and grace to seek counsel before taking destiny-defining decisions.”

I struggled with the Lord for three years when He began to speak to me about moving from Zaria. I was not sure whether I was going to Jos or coming to Abuja, but I just knew the season had wrapped up. Now, there are times people stay unnecessarily long; that is not what I am talking about. I am just saying it is important that you stay with God, and when you are convinced and you get a marching order, then you can take that step.

Do not be hasty with words. Someone calls you and says, “We want to raise one billion, and we need a hundred people who will bring ten million each. We know you have the capacity.” You feel motivated by that accolade and say, “I am in. In fact, add three more spots for me.” Eventually, when you are not able to redeem it and they ask you why, you say, “I was expecting some money.” You should have been patient: “All right, I am interested, but would you allow me to discuss it with my wife and my children?”

There are people who have sold properties their wives did not know about: the major property God had put in place as a refuge for the family. True story. I remember someone who reached me one time. They noticed that some church members were going around their land, singing praises and thanking God. True story. The woman became concerned. Do you know that one of their sons (in the name of Jesus, may you have good children), being the only son, had, unknown to them, negotiated with a church? I do not blame the church. He came as if it were his land, his late father’s land, negotiated everything, gave it to them at a discounted price, and they were happy and transferred the money to the young man’s account. The mother did not know; no other person knew, and the boy was just happy. So the woman saw the people rejoicing: it was their property; they had paid for it. The young man had just felt, “If I tell these people, they will close the door.” And you would think that because it was a lot of money, it would be used well. When the waster lands upon your life, even one billion will vanish like ten naira. Have you seen people go down from grace to grass? Minus you, in Jesus’ name.

Number five: do not be hasty with words. Do not be hasty with commitments. Think, pray and seek counsel before making destiny-defining decisions. You cannot call me and say, “Apostle, should I wear a yellow cloth or a white cloth?” That is not a destiny-defining decision. That is unnecessary. But there are certain destiny-defining decisions.

PATIENCE FORCES DECEPTION TO REVEAL ITSELF

In fact, I just felt stirred to tell you something I learned from Dr. Mike Murdock years ago. Still on point five, before we get to six: patience is a virtue that forces deception to reveal itself. Deception is an impatient trait. The moment you are patient, deception is frustrated. The strength of deception is your impatience. The moment you make up your mind to be patient, it is a virtue that forces deception to reveal itself.

When the disciples came to Jesus, they were happy, and all of them were doing their thing. Judas was there. Thomas was there. Jesus spoke to them about the kingdom and about their being apostles, and they just kept following. Then one time they got tired, and one by one they first started fighting among themselves, then doing all kinds of things. As soon as Jesus was arrested, they disappeared. Within seventy-two hours they were all lost, except John. Jesus rose from the dead, met Peter in John 21 and said, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” Peter was cut to the heart. Peter was broken, and he realized he had never truly been following Jesus just because he loved Him; he had been hoping he would find a place there. I advise you again, and this is also true for leaders: patience is a virtue that forces deception to reveal itself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CRITICS AND NAYSAYERS

When you look at any throne and see an overcomer sitting there, he used the ladder of supporters and the ladder of critics together.

THE SIXTH LESSON

NUMBER SIX. The sixth lesson we learn from the overcomer concerns critics and naysayers. You want to hear this. Critics and naysayers do two important things you need in order to actualize destiny.

Number one: critics and naysayers confirm that you are making notable progress. They are a system of confirmation that you are making notable progress. Show me a man who is doing something worthwhile; if there are no critics and no naysayers, he is probably not doing much.

The other angle is that critics and naysayers can be used to caution you against decline and destruction. Listen carefully: critics and naysayers can also be used by God to caution you against decline and destruction. So critics work both ways. They can become a system of confirmation, helping you see that you are making notable progress. But as uncomfortable as it is, critics and naysayers can also be used as a system of caution, to save you from decline and destruction.

THE TRAGEDY OF ONLY SUPPORTERS

This is where the tragedy of wanting only supporters around you comes in, and this is a weakness in leaders. We usually want those who sing our songs, who sing our praises and say nice things around us. Unfortunately, if you are surrounded only by supporters, you may not arrive. You need both the ministry of supporters and the ministry of critics and naysayers. This is an uncomfortable truth, but it is wisdom that comes from overcomers.

It is not unusual to have critics and naysayers. It is because you are doing something notable that has attracted their sight and attention, and they can be a system of confirmation that you are making notable progress. But there are times when, in the midst of the naysaying and the criticism, if you look carefully, there may be a message that is God speaking to you. You may not believe me, but time will make you appreciate what I am telling you: if you do not have an open heart toward criticism, you may not arrive at your destination.

A man of God said that criticism is an opinion harshly expressed. There are people who may say things the wrong way, but the content of what they are saying is worth your consideration. It was just the presentation that was wrong.

Woe betide a leader, I tell you, whether you are a businessman or a man of God, who is surrounded only by supporters who sing his praises. There are times God will allow the ministry of critics, and even naysayers. It will challenge you. It will cause you to look at what you are doing clearly. It helps to strengthen your conviction about what you are doing.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Unfortunately, because of the nature of criticism (please look up), if I have a hundred people singing my praises and saying wonderful, lovely things about me, and one person says something negative, usually, from our psychological make-up, that one criticism seems to overshadow all the wonderful things. This is where maturity comes in. In leadership we call this emotional intelligence: the ability to stand before uncomfortable situations and still be at ease. You need this.

Someone can look at you and say, “All you people are thieves. That is your car, and your tire is even about to come off.” Maybe the person made a mistake. But look properly. It could be true that, in the midst of the naysaying, he is telling you that you may have an accident. Something is wrong with your tire.

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE CRITICS

I know you would want me to pray that you will never have critics or naysayers. You are trying to say that you do not want to be like Jesus, or even like Satan, because whichever of them you choose, you will still have critics and naysayers. There are people who hate Jesus with a passion. There are people like me who hate Satan with a passion. Either way, you will never live in a world where all men love you. It does not exist. But if you live in a world where all men hate you, something is wrong with you. It is true: all men cannot hate you. That would be proof that something is wrong. There must be someone honest and sincere. That is also something for you to work on.

Critics and naysayers play these two sets of vital roles. Number one: they can help confirm that you are doing something notable. The thing about success is that the moment your results begin to speak, usually in our world everything becomes wrong with you. The shoes you were always wearing: now there is a problem with those shoes. Unfortunately, it is the cross that comes with

success, and people must be trained to be at peace with being controversial, at peace with being misunderstood. It is the cross you have to carry. You may not like what I am saying, but unfortunately I am not lying. What you are hearing is the truth from the throne of grace.

“Apostle, in my experience everybody really loves me. I think I just have this thing about me that makes everybody love me.” Congratulations. Keep receiving prophecies about promotion and increase from me, and watch what happens. Soon, one day, you will be elevated to a position where, all of a sudden, the person who used to clap for you has a problem clapping. “Now the success is too much. Not within this short time.” The car was you; the marriage was you; the house was you. “I think you need to adjust this…” It is because you have now bought a car. It is not about good or bad. It is a weakness in human nature.

The moment success becomes notable, your chances of being criticized are very high. We talk about politicians, and in all fairness, we ministers of the gospel receive our own too. But honestly, sometimes I pity politicians. My goodness, how do those guys survive these things? How do you survive walking along and hearing someone insult you, and sometimes people insult you to your face, and you see the man just smile, whether it was called for or uncalled for? That kind of stamina is noteworthy. There are pastors who start and say, “I am sincere. I love the Lord. What have I done?” Unfortunately, you do not have to do anything. You just have to be alive and make progress.

CLIMB WITH BOTH LADDERS

Receive grace, in the name of Jesus, not to be wounded by critics or naysayers. You can convert your pain into something that becomes a springboard for your glory.

When people criticize you, look open-heartedly into what they are saying. If, on careful examination, you find it is nonsense, ignore it and move on. But when you find there is something for you to adjust in your life or your organization,

take advantage of it. It does not matter how it came. The most important thing is that the truth got to you, and you become better by receiving it. This is a painful bar, but please receive it, because it will make you a champion.

When you look at any throne and see an overcomer sitting there, he used the ladder of supporters and the ladder of critics and naysayers together. He used them to climb to that elevated position. May you have the strength to forbear even when people misunderstand you. May you have the stamina to remain, continue and not lose sleep, in the name of Jesus.

LET ME TELL YOU MY STORY

A man of God once told me that he was being criticized so badly, he felt so bad, that he flew out of this nation to go and meet one of the fathers of faith. He was talking to him and said, "Sir, how could I…? I love my people with all my heart. I have been serving them with integrity of heart. How could they say this about me?" According to him, the father of faith was just smiling at him, and when he was done, the only thing he told him was, "Sit down; let me tell you my story." He had gone only halfway through the story when the man said, "That is all right. I have received my motivation. If this happened to you, and you are still standing…"

It is true: uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. Do not desire realms you are not prepared for. Honestly, there are times you need to thank God for what you call delay, because if you are not built for the forces that are waiting for you there, you will hate the throne because of what happens there.

Critics and naysayers confirm that you are making notable progress in life, but they can also be used to caution you against decline and destruction. I repeat one last time: you will need both supporters and critics. Unfortunately, you do not have to invite either of them; they come on their own. That is what makes it painful. No sane man will invite naysayers into his life. The system was designed to bring both. So on one hand they were calling Him King of kings

while they were eating the bread that was multiplied, and a few weeks later they cursed Him to His face and said, “Release Barabbas instead of this one. His blood be on us, and on our children.” And Jesus was silent, and He looked at them with compassion. He even said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

A TESTAMENT OF ENDURANCE

By this teaching, when you see anyone you perceive to be an overcomer, you can now respect them. These are the keys: painful keys.

So when you look at fathers of faith like our father in the Lord, Daddy Adeboye, at eighty-one turning eighty-two, imagine how long he has been criticized and how long he may have been misunderstood. But the man you see right there is a testament of endurance. Another of our fathers, who comes here all the time, is turning eighty-five now.

There are people who cannot survive two months in an organization. They pray and fast for that position. They become a director, and in two weeks they have thirty-nine emails full of insults, and they say, “I want to leave this office. What is this?” Yet someone sat in that office for sixteen years and thanked God every Sunday.

One of the ways God helps you is by giving you your desires if you insist. “Lord, I must become a senator. What is there in taking care of a constituency? I know I can do it.” And God says, “Be careful.” “I know all these people are just thieves and armed robbers.” And God answers your prayer by helping you win the election. As soon as you get there, you discover the number of insults you get from the entitled alone, and you want to leave that office. Have you noticed that those who become presidents leave quietly? Have you noticed, in Nigeria and across the globe, that nobody leaves that place just rejoicing? They leave quietly.

Have you seen many who work in certain organizations? By the time they are about to retire, they are quiet; they give thanks to God. Those waiting for that position are not even fighting: “No problem, just let me retire and go.” Then the person who gets in goes in with zeal: “Do not worry; in ten days I will transform this organization.” After two years, they are looking for every man of God they can find: “Something must be going wrong.” Nothing is wrong. That is how it is.

“Lord, You must give me triplets. I do not want just one child.” And God says, “All right,” and answers her prayer. Then the triplets come, and you do not know what to do with yourself. After two months you call all your friends, and they say, “Sorry, we are busy,” and you say, “You are wicked.” No. Just do your thing. It is your cross; carry it.

Years ago I listened to a message, I think by T. D. Jakes: “Can You Stand to Be Blessed?” A very powerful message. It takes stamina to sustain the blessing. Many people are praying for what is bigger than them. There are things you call delay that are the mercy of God preparing you first, so that what you are praying for does not become what kills you.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE

There are evil men, selfish men and naive men, but there are also men who are gifts when they come into your life.

THE SEVENTH LESSON

NUMBER SEVEN. You need to listen to this one, in the name of Jesus Christ. There are three groups of people you must be aware of. It requires great wisdom to deal with them. Please write this and learn: lessons from an overcomer, destiny-defining principles. There are three groups of people you will always find around your life, and it will take a lot of wisdom and discretion to deal with them; otherwise you will never arrive at the place of destiny.

WICKED PEOPLE

Number one: wicked people. Do not worry; just write. Let us talk about wicked people. Unfortunately, you may not be able to drive them out of your life permanently. You will find them in your neighborhood and around your organization, and sometimes, as painful as it is, they will be too useful to be thrown away completely.

I want to teach you something you will be grateful for. Proverbs 6:18 lists, among the six things the Lord hates, "an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief." Let us read Proverbs 4:14–17. Wisdom is coming to someone now, in the name of Jesus.

> **PROVERBS 4:14-17**
> *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.*

There are people like that on earth. Believe me, I am not just trying to be negative. There are people who have chosen to partner with the devil to be wicked. It is called an evil heart. There are wicked people in our world, wicked people around your organization, wicked people in church, wicked people in society. It is not within your power to drive them away. You have to sustain the wisdom to manage them. Some of those wicked people are your superiors for now, and you must learn to work with them. They come in various forms, and believers must be educated on how to deal with wicked people.

SELFISH PEOPLE

Number two: the second of the three groups you must be aware of, if you want to enjoy the life of an overcomer, is selfish people. I will tell you the difference shortly, but please write: number one, wicked people; number two, selfish people.

Who are those called selfish? Please watch this. Selfish people are not necessarily evil people. They are just indifferent to your state, provided they get what they are looking for. The character of selfishness is that it does not mind who is wounded in the process. The most important thing for a selfish person is obtaining his desire. It does not matter who dies, who cries or who is in pain. A selfish person does not see anything at his side. All he sees is what he desires. He wants it so badly that it does not matter who dies; he will betray family for it. He will do anything, provided it ends with him achieving it.

A selfish person has no business harming you if there is no point of conflict between the two of you. He may even look like an ally for a while. Unfortunately, you will find these people everywhere, and I am hoping and praying with all my heart that you are not one of them.

NAIVE PEOPLE

Number three: ignorant, or naive, people. Write it down, and I will explain. "Naive" is spelled n-a-i-v-e. What does it mean to be naive? To show a lack of consciousness, a lack of experience, a lack of wisdom, a lack of maturity, a lack of judgment. There are people who lack that level of maturity. They are called naive. A naive person is like a notebook on which nothing has been written. That is what makes them dangerous, because they become whatever is suddenly written there. The easiest people to deceive are not wicked people, who are deceivers themselves, nor selfish people, but naive people.

HOW SATAN USES ALL THREE

Now let me tell you this. When Satan wants to destroy you, the greatest tool he needs is a wicked person. If he cannot find a wicked person, he will make do with a selfish person. If he cannot find a selfish person, he will make do with a naive person. All three can cause the same harm in your life.

The difference is that a wicked person does his wickedness from a premeditated standpoint, so before and after your pain he is happy; it was the plan. A selfish person, like Judas, is focused on making money out of Jesus, not with the intention that Jesus should die. Usually, when the harm is done and he has what he was looking for, he has the conscience to regret it and say, "But I did not want it to go this far."

Have you heard of people who beat someone until the person died, and in police custody they tell you, "The plan was not to kill the person. I arranged the kidnapping so that I would get ten million. I did not plan for the person to die"?

Wicked people, selfish people and ignorant or naive people can become tools that bring disaster into your life, unless you sustain the wisdom to live with them. Unfortunately, for the rest of your life you will be immersed in the midst of these kinds of people, every day, including tomorrow.

ALL THREE AT THE CROSS

You would think that because Jesus was the Son of the living God, He would not have these kinds of people around Him. They were among His disciples. Unfortunately, they were among the scribes and the Pharisees. They were among the members of His congregation and among the onlookers. For the rest of His life on earth, Jesus, your Jesus, my Jesus, the Word, God incarnate, lived in the midst of these people.

Do you know that all three groups played a role together and made the death of Jesus possible? I do not have the time to show you fully, and we know now that it was the hidden wisdom of God. But these three groups of people were there: the naive people who said, “Crucify Him. His blood be on us”; the scribes and the Pharisees, who plotted it intentionally; and Judas, who wanted to make money out of Jesus, not to destroy Him.

Ladies and gentlemen, please hear me: if you do not sustain the wisdom to walk with these people, you will get into trouble, especially with naive people. I hope you know that the first fall happened because of this. The woman you call Eve did not fall because she was a wicked woman. No. She was beguiled. 2 Corinthians 11:3: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” Satan came to a naive woman and began to sell a narrative, to sell an idea.

How many good people have been turned into wicked people because they were so naive? That is why believers must be trained and mentored. There are people today who have been made to steal. They are not thieves; they were just naive.

There are many young boys today who have been made to join terrorist groups. By the time these boys are caught, some of them are barely out of their teens, in their early adulthood, and you find they were just indoctrinated with extremist views. They were not wicked people by default. They were not selfish people by default. They were just naive, uneducated, unexposed people who became victims of the desires and plans of others.

I am praying for you: whatever would make you prey in the hand of Satan and in the hand of wicked men, I pray in the name of Jesus that God will not allow that thing to come around your life.

ARCHIVE THIS TEACHING

Tonight's message may not apply to everybody. There are people who are too innocent to benefit from this message. They have not grown enough to see its value. There are teachings you need to archive; you may not understand their implications until you rise beyond certain levels, and then you will rush back to that message. There are others for whom this is a description of the season they are in.

These three groups of people: this was a direct teaching the Holy Spirit taught me. I did not read it in any book. As much as possible, keep praying and sanitizing your environment, but you have to get used to it. The cosmos is filled with a mixed multitude. Believers are just a portion of those on earth. Did the Bible not tell you that all men have not faith? That means you should not expect everybody to say "God bless you." You find "God bless you" in church, but you will not find it everywhere. There are people who will honor you and say, "Apostle, God bless you," but there are others who are vicious and wicked, and others who are selfish.

Unfortunately, this selfishness has even spilled over into spouses and into leaders. There are people who would not mind their entire families going down, with all due respect, provided they go forward. There are parents who would

not mind their children becoming prostitutes, provided they return with money for them to eat. The Lord will show us mercy, in Jesus' name.

I am reminded of a true story I heard of a woman who arranged the kidnapping of one of her own loved ones, by herself, and was joining all the people in crying too. How many young boys today talk to armed robbers and say, "My father has money in this other room, the second one"? When the armed robbers come, they tell the boy to lie down too, and he lies down, and you think he is innocent. It is when they carry off the money that the sharing formula goes wrong, and that is usually when everything scatters.

EYES TO SEE

I am praying for you, making reference to my teaching "The Seeing Eyes." Anybody you have drawn into your life who is holding a sword at your neck that you cannot see: I am crying to my God tonight that He will open your eyes to see this night. Listen: in this world, if God does not show you mercy, you will be helping to hold the knife that will kill you and not know it. I am not planting fear. This is wisdom. This is how life works.

Whenever you see an overcomer, there are men who know this: that among all the people who say, "Apostle, sir, yes sir, yes ma, Your Majesty, you are the greatest man of God in the world," among those mixed multitudes, you must have the intelligence to discern that there are wicked people, selfish people and naive people.

THERE ARE STILL SINCERE PEOPLE

But as I taught you when I taught on destiny helpers, I am happy to announce to you that there are also sincere people. Do not think everyone is out to destroy you. No. Do not allow your pain to stop you from knowing that there are sincere people. Do not throw away the baby with the bathwater. I need to balance this before we get to the last point.

There are sincere people. I pray you become one of them, that you become a breath of fresh air to someone, so that the person will say, “From the day you came into my life, you healed me of the pain of twenty years. I never believed there could be Christians who are sincere, but thank God for the gift of you.”

I am praying again for someone who came to church saying, “God, please bring a good friend into my life. I am tired of people piercing me. I have spent my life with injuries from betrayals.” May my God, who is also your God, send sincere people to you.

Can I tell you? Sincere people have a therapeutic effect. When you find godly and sincere people, people around whom you can sleep with your eyes closed… And the thing about life and about God is that one sincere person can bring healing for what a hundred people may have caused you. There are sincere people. Burn this into the back of your mind. Probably you are seated next to one.

Do not draw a conclusion from your years of pain and betrayal, from your years of whatever: “Oh, they cheated me in business. Church people are terrible. All pastors are demons.” No. Do not conclude like that. There are still sincere people. This is a prophetic message for someone.

Are there still good men? Yes. Are there still good women? Yes. Are there still good parents? Yes. Are there still good politicians? Yes. Are there still good leaders? Yes. Are there still good men of God? Yes. Are there still sincere Christians? Yes. If you are not part of that sincere army, there is room for you to join. But do not conclude that all men are evil. You may be wrong. There are evil men, selfish men and naive men, but my goodness, there are men who are gifts when they come into your life.

Believe me when I tell you this: this ministry, Koinonia, has enjoyed the ministry of such men. There are a few of these men God has brought into my own life. Truly, you can call them consolations from God.

Adam knew his wife, and she had Cain and Abel. What did Abel do to Cain for Cain to kill him? Cain killed Abel and was arguing with God. You can imagine the pain of that loss in the heart of Eve. But the Bible says it beautifully: "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth… then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."

I am praying for you one more time: perhaps a preacher who has been badly wounded and betrayed by the people around you; perhaps parents. You trusted people, and they went behind your back and caused you pain. Your heart is bleeding right now. You have lost money; you have lost trust. You shared secrets about your life with people, and they made shipwreck of it. As a consolation, may my God send true gifts into your life. May my God send good people to your ministry, your business and your organization, in the name of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER NINE

WHAT IS WORTH DYING FOR

The most important things in your life are defined not just by what you live for, but by what you can die for.

THE EIGHTH LESSON

NUMBER EIGHT: lessons from an overcomer. The eighth and final destiny-defining principle I want you to learn tonight is this: define the most important things in your life. Not everything is worth dying for. Please do not kill yourself unnecessarily. There are things that are not worth dying for.

There are people who have died who, if they had the opportunity to come back, would slap themselves on the cheek and say, "It was not worth it." I can tell you that everything in life does not hold equal value. You will never rise to the state of an overcomer, and you will have wasted the lessons from your discussion with an overcomer, if you do not know this.

All great people, all champions in the Spirit, in ministry, in organizations and in life, know it. Some of them have learned from many years of pain that not everything in life is worth dying for. I have studied the subject of fulfillment myself, and I have taught you a few teachings around fulfillment. I refer you to two of them: number one, "What Seekest Thou?"; number two, "The Law of Seasons." In studying the subject of success and fulfillment, at the end of my study, and gleaning from the wisdom of fathers and true champions, I found that there are only three things worth dying for.

The most important things in your life are defined by what you can die for, not just what you are living for. Anything you cannot die for is not that important. Do not let it give you a heart attack. There are people today carrying self-inflicted health concerns, because they have put themselves in positions where they have not defined the most important things.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Can I share with you my perspective on the three most important things in your life? Number one: your relationship with Jesus. This is the first thing that is worth dying for, not just living for. If you can only live for Jesus, you are not serious. Genuine love is demonstrated in the ability to live for a cause and, if need be, die for it.

> **MARK 8:35–37**
> *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Ladies and gentlemen, your relationship with Jesus is the guarantee of your eternal destiny. It should be the most important thing in your life. This is not a preacher's manipulation. No. I do not care what you have or what you do well: if Jesus is not at the epicenter of your life, you have not defined your priorities right.

YOUR FAMILY

Number two: what is the second thing worth dying for? Your family, both biological and spiritual. Your family is worth dying for.

When Job lost everything in his life, the only thing left was family. Business could not stand the test of time. Reputation could not stand the test of time.

Assets, as we call them, could not stand the test of time. At the end, only one woman stood by his side, and even she stood there in her pain and said, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.” Job, you are my husband, but… At least she stood by him.

Can I tell you? Respect those who can see all your limitations and still love you for who you are. Not everybody has that patience. If you do not respect those who have seen the good, the bad and the ugly and still love you the way you are, you are making a big mistake.

Jesus and the gospel: worth dying for. Family: worth dying for. Now, I know a lot of people say all kinds of things about church, and they are largely right: “Church is full of hypocrites. Church is full of this.” But can I tell you? The safest place you can ever be, spiritually, is the house of God. In the midst of all these stories here and there, you will still find people who love you in church. You will still find those who will cry with you in church. If you think I am joking, lose a loved one, or let something happen, and that is when you will know that many people are selfish. It is in church that you will find someone who does not know you, who, just seeing you cry, will come to you and say, “What is the matter? Can I help you?” Do not get so used to wicked people that you think everyone is wicked. In church there are good people. There are all kinds of vessels: vessels of clay and of wood, vessels of silver and of gold.

A SHOULDER FOR THE WOUNDED

Many years ago I made a commitment with my life that, aside from being a man of God, one of my greatest goals in life would be to be a shoulder for as many wounded people as possible. Beyond being a man of God, my greatest testimony is not just that I was or am a great man of God. I am not called to solve everybody’s problem, but with the much or the little that I can do, if I can use my life to wipe somebody’s tears, it may not be the best, but it was not the worst.

We are not called to do everything. When it comes to being there for people, you do not need ordination. You do not need education. You just need a good heart. There are things you will need qualifications to do; showing love and kindness is not one of them. Educated or otherwise, wealthy or otherwise, you can show love and kindness. When it comes to love and kindness, gender does not necessarily matter, and age may not matter.

Our world is full of bleeding people, bleeding preachers. I once saw a picture, I think on YouTube; I cannot remember what I was looking for, and I saw a graphic representation of a man holding on to his small son, shielding him, and there were all kinds of arrows in that man. I said, "How true." Some of you never know what men of God go through: the stress, the pain, the internal crises, having to set aside their own issues. This is true for preachers, and it is true for leaders. And sometimes the church can be full of very ungrateful people, who do not know that every sermon you hear comes from a standpoint of blood, tears and sacrifice.

How about leaders? You come to your workplace and see ideas that keep scaling that organization, not knowing that someone lost sleep for that idea to come about. I am praying for you, that you will train your spirit to respect greatness when you see it. There is no gift of greatness in the Bible. Greatness is the cumulative result of this journey, and tonight we are learning lessons from an overcomer, so that you will become one yourself.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

The three most important things. Number one: your relationship with Jesus. Number two: your biological and spiritual family. Number three: your assignment.

In John 4:34, Jesus expressed it so beautifully: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." The word "meat" there means

nourishment, almost as though His very sustenance depended on the ability to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work.

Can I tell you? Sometimes I have a very busy schedule. By Tuesday we are in Côte d'Ivoire, through to Wednesday; we return straight back, and I am preaching at the Foursquare convention on Thursday and Friday morning. As soon as I am done, I head from Abuja back to Lagos, and then to Port Harcourt, to preach that same night, one session with House on the Rock. Sometimes you are stretched to the borders, and you keep asking, "Why all this?"

I can tell you, the joy that comes to your heart when you know your life is a blessing cannot be compared with anything. No amount of money will replace it. If you have not tasted this, your life is not valuable enough. There must be a fulfillment beyond the material things you get, and it comes by pouring yourself out as a drink offering. Someday, if Christ tarries, we will all not be here. And as I always say, the hymn writer says we will pass from the earth and its toiling, only to be remembered by what we have done. We used to sing this song in seminary, and some would even cry, and then we would go back and do exactly what the song was warning against.

WHAT IS NOT WORTH DYING FOR

Your relationship with Jesus is worth dying for. Let me tell you what is not worth dying for: fame, money, positions, titles and competitive achievements. They are not worth dying for. You will hurt yourself, pierce yourself through with many sorrows, and not even live to see yourself step into them.

There are people today who will not sleep. Why? Because they saw a wrapper someone wore. Please, after Koinonia, go and sleep. I release that grace upon you. There are people today who will not sleep because they checked their social media and saw two likes, two follows, two shares, and said, "No, this cannot be." Go and sleep, please. "This person was my junior in school, and he is now dedicating his house." No. Please go and sleep. It is only when you are alive

that you can go forward. Dead men do not go forward. There is no progress for dead people. There are things that are not worth losing sleep over.

Please, I give you sound counsel, a lesson from an overcomer: learn to be content while you aspire to great things. At every level, contentment is not mediocrity; it is gratitude. Celebrate seasons. Do not hurry out of them. You will miss the season you are rushing out of now.

With all humility, there are things I cannot do anymore by reason of this supposedly public, celebrity life. Sometimes I look back and wish I had moments when I could smuggle myself out to just walk around. Can you imagine? If someone sees you on the street, even if you are just walking, the person will kneel down there and say, “Finally I have found God. I will not let you go.” They can literally hold your trousers at a junction, and you know Nigerians are people of faith: they do not care if they tear the trousers, as long as they get their blessing. To them it is a good bargain.

I am generally not the kind of person who likes all this “Oh, you are this,” but sometimes you get to a point where you cannot hide anymore. You cannot do anything. And most people get beguiled by those things. When you see great people, you usually admire them and are inspired, and for many people that inspiration then becomes cancerous, because they lose sleep: “I cannot believe it. Is he not the guy whom I even led into being filled with the Holy Ghost? He now has a membership of a thousand people, and I am here with three or four.” Please, dear man of God, do not lose sleep. The one person you are training is equivalent to a nation.

A competitive spirit is cancerous, literally, medically cancerous. It will destroy you. Anything that will not let me sleep: may God not bring it around my life. Be content with the car you have now while trusting God for a greater one. A greater one will come, but drive the one you have with pride, and do not let anybody bully you. Be content with the house you have now. Be content with

the one shirt you have now. Man of God, be content with the fifty faithful members God has given you. Serve them with all your heart.

PART THREE

SCARS AND CROWNS

Learn from Scars and Crowns

A Prayer for Overcomers

CHAPTER TEN

LEARN FROM SCARS AND CROWNS

There is something only pain can teach. There is something only failure can teach.

A BONUS PRINCIPLE

LET ME SAY THIS before we find a place to pray. If I were the overcomer giving you these lessons, I would add one more: learn from scars, and learn from crowns. If you learn from victorious people alone, you have not learned well. There is something only pain can teach. There is something only failure can teach.

Please, I want you to listen to me. I give you this as a bonus principle, and then we pray. We live in a world today that downplays those who have failed and focuses on those who have succeeded. The person who has failed knows something the successful person may never know. Believe me, there is something a woman who had three children, each immediately after nine months, can teach you. But there is something only the woman who knows the pain of barrenness can teach you.

You must learn to learn from people who have failed and remained, not just from those who have succeeded. The person who has failed and refused to give up is as powerful a teacher as the person who has succeeded. If I were the

overcomer in this teaching and had the privilege of teaching you, I would add number nine: learn from scars as well as crowns.

BOTH HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL ME

I know you are a man of God, and you have experienced miracles and explosion, spreading your branches all over. There is something you can teach us. But I also want to hear from the man who has pastored only ten members for ten years and has not given up. There is a kind of wisdom only that man can bring.

I want to learn from the woman who gave birth immediately and from the one who waited twenty years. Both of them have something to tell me. I want to learn from the man who never had the opportunity to be educated but was able to raise three or four children, not just from the CEO who became a billionaire at nineteen. Both of them have something to tell me.

Can I tell you? Do not fall prey to the mistake many have made. Do not respect only successful people. Respect those who have failed and are still standing. When a man fails and refuses to give up, there is something he has and can tell you.

The one who is very wealthy can teach you financial principles, but the one who has little can teach you joy and gratitude in the midst of little. You need to learn from both of them. The wealthy man may not be able to sleep if he loses one billion, but the person who has remained with little and knows how to sleep can teach you how to find rest when things do not work.

THE SCAR THAT BRANDS HIM SAVIOR

Most believers ignore people who have scars alone, without a crown, not knowing that the road to the throne is the cross. When we get to heaven (I have taught you this), among the many ways we will know Jesus, it will not be just the crown on His head. He is not the only one with a crown. The twenty-four elders have crowns. The saints will be given crowns. But there is only One who has a kind of scar no one can replicate, and that scar is what brands Him as Savior. Not everybody can show you a crown, but if they can show you their scar, respect them.

The man does not have a car, but he has trekked with his children from primary school until they are now in university. Let him teach you how to be joyful without things. There is something he can teach you.

I learn from everyone. The Bible says, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways.” They have something to teach you. When I meet a man who has failed and is crying, I ask him, “What can you teach me?” When I meet a man who has succeeded exceptionally, I ask him, “What can you teach me?” I do not learn only from victors. I learn from those who are testaments of endurance. Those who have failed can teach you how not to fail.

It is not only elderly people who can teach. Children can also teach. Elderly people can never become children again, but children have a chance to become elderly people. Respect them; they have the advantage of time. Elderly people can have wisdom, but there may be no time to correct certain mistakes. Children have the advantage of time. They can be Saul today and become Paul tomorrow. Respect it.

LESSONS FROM THE PRISON

I have visited the prisons many times, and we have various projects for the prisons. I am inspired, sometimes beyond imagination, as I see these inmates. Some of them have come to the point where they have admitted their wrongs. Do you know there was a time we wanted to help bail out a few people who had been there for a long time, and the controllers advised us that they had learned from experience that some of these people have no family? They are better off there. Even if you bail them out, they will not go, because it has become their family. So when you sit down with that person and ask, “What do you have to teach me?” he will tell you, “Listen to instructions.”

THE YOUNGER YOU AND THE OLDER YOU

I am wrapping up now. I was teaching at a youth session, my final session in South Africa this year, and I decided to inspire some of the youths within the nation there. I want to borrow that example as I wrap up. I told them I was going to simulate a discussion between an elderly you and a younger you.

If the ten-year-old you met with the fifty-year-old you, what would their discussion be? Would it be, “Well done; you are what I always wanted to be,” or, “Something is wrong; I wish I could go back”? I have told you that at the end of your life you will be remembered only by the problems you created or the ones you solved.

There are many of you who, right now, are in that conversation. If the ten-year-old version of you looked at the you of now, you would watch him bleed and say, “This is not what I wanted to become. This was not our discussion. What happened?” Now that you are alive, you can make the you of now someone the you waiting ten or twenty years from now can celebrate, so that you can look back at this version of yourself and say, “Well done. I made the wrongs right. I built the relationships. I got my life back in order.”

I am praying for you, that the seventy- or eighty-year-old version of you will not turn back, watch the younger version crying and say, "I kept calling your attention when you were thirty. I said you were missing it, and you did not listen. You got to forty, and I said you were missing it, and you did not listen. Now you are eighty and full of regrets." There are many elderly people today going to their graves in pain. They made certain mistakes.

EVEN OVERCOMERS CRY ON THE THRONE

And watch this; this is the conclusion of my discourse tonight. The man who sits today as an overcomer is not always smiling. Sometimes they cry, even on the throne, because they remember with regret opportunities missed, principles they did not adhere to. I was sent by that overcomer to you, to tell you that the mistake you are making has been made by someone before, and the end of it is not joy. You have a chance to correct it now. Someone has already done the unwise thing you are doing now. He finally became an overcomer, but there are things…

WHAT THE OVERCOMERS WOULD SAY

The man called Abraham, even though he was a patriarch of faith: do not forget, Ishmael came, and Ishmael fought Isaac, and he still fights Isaac till today. So the lesson from the overcomer called Abraham is that impatience will always make you give birth to what fights your promise. Make sure you do not just say, "I am the seed of Abraham." Learn from the pain of the patriarch.

If you were to meet David today, David would tell you, "I was a great man, after God's own heart, but there were mistakes I made with my life. Do not make them."

How about Solomon the wise? If you were to see Solomon seated today, he would tell you, "Read the book of Ecclesiastes for the next month," and he would cry while saying it. "Read the book of Ecclesiastes, and give it to every

successful person to read: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

If you were to meet the man Paul, seated as an overcomer, he would say, "I have a message for you: know God early. Know God early. It will save you a lot of problems."

If you were to meet Esau and Jacob, they would tell you, "Do not sell your destiny for a pottage of stew. It is not worth it. Do not sell your birthright because you are hungry. Endure. Your birthright is greater than your hunger today."

THE GREATEST OVERCOMER OF ALL

And then, if you sit and watch the greatest Overcomer of all time (He is called the King of kings; He is seated upon that throne), let me tell you what He will tell you: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rest from yesterday. Rest from pain. Rest from misery. Rest from curses. "Take my yoke upon you… and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

If you meet the Overcomer, He will tell you, "No matter what your sins are, I paid that price for you as proof of love." You may not be able to do anything about yesterday, but you can start afresh today and make meaning of your today for a great tomorrow.

We are surrounded by overcomers. They are called a great cloud of witnesses. I have been assigned by the Spirit to glean from their wisdom and to share with you tonight irrefutable, destiny-defining principles that have turned ordinary men into champions, hoping that soon enough, in your lifetime, you will have a chance to sit upon this rare throne that not many sit on, as an overcomer yourself: that your name will be changed from Joshua Selman to Overcomer,

from Mary or Grace to Overcomer; that people will look at you and indeed you will be called an overcomer.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A PRAYER FOR OVERCOMERS

You may not be able to do anything about yesterday, but you can start afresh today.

PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR

PLEASE RISE TO YOUR FEET. Please hold the hands of someone on your left and right.

While you are holding the hands of your neighbors, left and right, I want you to pray a very simple, sincere prayer from the depths of your heart. Say, "Lord, cause my neighbor to become an overcomer, so that they do not ignore these lessons that have come from the pain of overcomers." Go ahead; that is your only prayer tonight. Pray for your neighbor.

Go ahead and pray: "Father, cause my brother, my sister, my neighbor to learn these profound, destiny-altering lessons from the overcomers: from Abraham the overcomer, Paul the overcomer, Jesus the greatest of all overcomers, and from our fathers who have become overcomers."

THERE IS HOPE FOR A TREE

I pray for you in the name of Jesus. Many of you have been wounded in life and destiny. You have felt as if you have failed and failed and failed. I am speaking by the Spirit of the living God: every negative voice that has told you that you will never emerge, never become, may that voice be silenced now.

For those of you who have made all kinds of mistakes in your life and destiny and are wondering whether it is worth continuing the journey, I bring you glad tidings: "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again… through the scent of water it will bud." Receive grace to keep going. Receive grace to keep going. Receive grace to keep going.

I pray for everyone who has until now ignored any of these eight lessons we have learned today from the overcomer. I pray for the grace to retrace your steps, the grace to take the wisdom of the overcomer seriously, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Finally, I pray for you: every power that wants to fight your becoming an overcomer in experience, becoming an inspiration to all around you and to younger generations, I pray that power is cleared out of the way. I call you, by faith and by grace, an overcomer. Your life will become an inspiration to many, many people. Your life will become a motivation to many people, in the name of Jesus Christ. From today, people will look at your life, and the energy to continue will be imparted to them, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE CHIEFEST OVERCOMER CALLS YOU

Let me make the altar call now. You have heard the message I brought you from the chiefest Overcomer Himself. Please keep standing; let us honor the altar call. We will be done in a minute or two.

You have heard Abraham's perspective, Paul's perspective, Joshua Selman's perspective. But Jesus Himself calls you: the chiefest of all overcomers, in fact the reason there are any other overcomers. He is calling you to make it right with Him tonight. It does not matter what has gone right or wrong in your life, ladies and gentlemen. When you come to Jesus, He gives you an opportunity to make it right.

I want to call two groups of people in one right now. Number one: those making this decision for the first time. You are saying, "Apostle, I would do myself a disservice to ignore this call, not after the things I have heard today." And number two: people who are saying, "I need to rededicate my life. As you kept reading the list, I found I was a victim of almost all of them. Almost all my life I have ignored the counsel of this Overcomer, and I want to make it right."

I am going to count from one to five. Leave wherever you are, literally run, come and stand before me, as I lead you to make this decision and to encounter this Overcomer. Please, may I request that you stand, so that there will be space. I am counting now. One. Let us honor them as they come. Two. Come. Do not be ashamed. The Overcomer calls you regardless of your past, regardless of yesterday, regardless of your limitations. He gives you a new opportunity.

Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, thank you for making this noble decision. If you are joining them, please hurry. It is my joy and honor to introduce to you the Overcomer, Jesus Himself, the Captain of our salvation, the One who sits at the right hand of the Father. He calls you into a functional relationship. The Bible says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

THE PRAYER OF SALVATION

May I request that you lift your right hand high above your head as a sign of surrender, and say this after me. Believe it while you say it:

"Lord Jesus, I have heard Your word. I come to You just as I am. I believe that You died for my sin. I believe that You rose again for my justification. Right now, I receive Your life, and I declare that eternal life is in my spirit now. I declare that You are my Savior, my Lord and my King. I also declare that the power of sin, Satan, hell and the grave is broken over my life. I am a child of God from tonight, and I live the victorious Christian life. Amen."

Father, thank You for these blessed ones. They have lifted their hands, declaring Your lordship over their lives. I pray for them in the name of Jesus: may the grace to walk as true believers be released upon you. By the authority of Scripture, the power of sin, Satan, hell and the grave is broken over your life. In Jesus' mighty name I pray. Amen.

Please, may I request that you move to my right. There are counselors waving placards. They will have a word with you very quickly, and then you will be back in your seat. Let us honor them as they go. Thank you so very much.

WALK AS AN OVERCOMER

Have you been blessed tonight? In the name of Jesus, I pray for you: by reason of what you have learned today, I impart upon you the grace to walk as an overcomer, in the name of Jesus Christ. As you apply these wisdom keys, I pray for you from the depths of my heart that you will experience extraordinary results in your life.

May my God bless you. May He lift you. May He cause His face to shine upon you. May He lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. I prophesy to you that it is well with you. The week beginning will be one of your best weeks this year. You will find favor. You will find honor. The Lord will give you speed. No weapon fashioned against you will prosper, in the name of Jesus Christ. You will go from glory to glory, in Jesus' matchless name.

Let us share the grace together in fellowship: the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with us, now and forever. Amen. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, as we dwell in the house of the Lord forever and ever. Amen. God bless you. See you on Sunday.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

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Revelation 3:21 — To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne (Chapter 1)

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Living Sermons

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Apostle Joshua Selman is a Nigerian minister of the gospel, teacher of God's Word, and the founder of Eternity Network International (ENI), the ministry behind the widely known Koinonia meetings.

His ministry is marked by deep scriptural teaching, prophetic insight, and a strong emphasis on intimacy with God, spiritual growth, and the accurate understanding of kingdom principles.

Through conferences, teachings, and global outreach, he has impacted millions of believers, equipping them to walk in spiritual maturity, purpose, and effective service in God's kingdom.

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“There is something only pain can teach.”

APOSTLE JOSHUA SELMAN