

Shepherd Daily Devotional – The Power to Succeed

Feb 2022

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SHEPHERD

Daily Devotional

A non-denominational devotional for leaders.

The Power to Succeed



“And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” - Deuteronomy 8:18 (NKJV)

By Ben Dankaka

NOT FOR SALE

Thank you for downloading the e-copy of *Shepherd Daily Devotional*.

In this edition, Ben Dankaka explores ways that anyone can succeed in life by applying God's kingdom principles of leadership.

It is our prayer that you will be led by the Holy Spirit as you go through the pages of this devotional. God bless you.

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How to study *Shepherd Daily Devotional*

- Begin each topic by reading the scriptural reference(s) at the top left-hand side of every page.
- After reading each topic, pray and meditate.
- You may study alone or as a group in order to discuss the lessons on every topic.
- Although the various topics in this devotional are arranged according to days, you can, however choose to study the devotional anyhow you like. For instance, you can choose to study the whole devotional in a single day or read any of the topics, irrespective of the days.

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E-mail: shepherddailydevotional@gmail.com

Website: <https://sccl2.cw.center/>

Phone: +234 803 9308 537

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**Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations are from the
Holy Bible, New International Version.**

NOT FOR SALE

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A Note from The Author



What Lies Within You

“The ability to achieve great things isn’t the exclusive right of a few people.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “What lies behind us, and what lies before us are but tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” To put it another way, our circumstances are not as big as the power that is buried within us. When Emerson made that remark he was possibly talking about our ability to triumph against all odds. Though we are often surrounded by challenges, within us is **the power to succeed**. Throughout history, we’ve continually seen individuals who did remarkable things in the midst of challenges. But because they are few, we often think they were specially created by God to do impossible things.

Know this: the ability to achieve great things isn’t the exclusive right of a few people because every human was born with the power to succeed. The heroes and heroines that you’ve read about in history books are no different from you because you were created by God and equipped with the ability to do great things as well. I don’t know what you think of yourself. But I know you have within you, the power to succeed. I am certain of this because you were created in God’s image.

John, the beloved disciple explained to us that “We are from God and have overcome, because the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). **So, be conscious** of the fact that God is great, and since He put His Spirit inside of you, then you are automatically endowed with the power to succeed. As you study this edition of *Shepherd Daily Devotional*, I pray that you would recognize the power within you and be inspired to succeed against all odds.

Enjoy the New month!

- **Ben Dankaka**

Acknowledge the Source of Your Power

“It is important for us to realize that God is deeply interested in our success.”

In his farewell speech, Moses instructed his people to recognize God **as the One who gives the power to produce wealth**. Why was that important? You see, whenever we do not acknowledge God as the source of our wealth, we automatically claim His glory. One of the blunders of our generation is self-aggrandizement. Go to social media and you will see a myriad of success stories aimed at glorifying individuals at the expense of the Creator. I am not saying we shouldn't celebrate ourselves. But when we describe ourselves as “idols” or “self-made”, we put God at the rear seat.

God is deeply interested in our success. For that reason, He expects us to put our faith in Him. **The purpose is to humble us so that He can guide us along the right path. Recall that Moses had reminded the Israelites of the time God gave them manna to eat in the desert, to humble and to test them so that in the end it might go well with them** (Deuteronomy 8:16). When we acknowledge God as our source, we will not only avoid the sin of self-glory, but would find ourselves progressing from one success to another.

Prayer/Confession: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge you as the primary source of all that I have. Thank you, Lord.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Deuteronomy 8:10-20

Proverbs 3:16

1 Chronicles 29:12

Power creates Wealth

“Whatever gifts we have is embedded within our spiritual, physical and mental abilities.”

Moses had advised the Israelites to acknowledge God because it is He who gives **power** to get wealth. What sort of **power** was Moses referring to? In the New International Version (NIV) of the same verse, the word, “power” is replaced with “ability”. Which means, God is the One who gives us the **ability** to produce wealth. But the power or ability that God has given us isn’t a magical or mythical power. In essence, the power we have consists of our mental, physical and spiritual gifts. There’s no any other power.

So, wealth is produced through the effective use of these THREE God-given abilities, which is demonstrated through skill or talent. Those who have attained **power** and **influence** had to rely on their mental, physical or spiritual gifts. Therefore, the use or abuse of these gifts is what determines our success in life. All of the things you have achieved so far and the things you will ever achieve in this life are connected to these three abilities. Therefore, the power that enable us succeed is originally God made; not self-made. When you recognize this power and then learn how to use it, you will succeed in every endeavor.

Prayer/Confession: LORD, show me how to create wealth with the power you’ve given me. In Jesus Name. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Genesis 1:26-28

Exodus 4:10-12

Daniel 2:21

The Real Power

“Real power comes when we are able to create something or do something new, with the natural abilities we’ve been given.”

It might interest you to know that those who think they have to be tyrannical before exercising power are under the impression that power is acquired. Power is not *picked up* because it is an inborn ability – we are born with it. When you try to **acquire** power, you will no doubt, abandon your innate power - which is your original power and then find yourself acquiring a power that isn't meant for you. *Real* power comes when we are able to create something or do something new with the innate abilities we've been given.

Scripture says, “God made the earth by his **power**; he founded the world by his **wisdom** and stretched out the heavens by his **understanding**” (Jeremiah 10:12). Notice that when God created the earth, He neither exploited anyone nor asked anyone to do the work for Him. He created the earth by Himself, with His wisdom and understanding. Interestingly, the two qualities spring from His being. That is, from inside of God. If you want real power, you have to do what God did. Whether you want to create a product or business, it will require your wisdom and understanding. To be powerful, look inwards.

Prayer/Confession: Dear LORD, teach me your ways.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Proverbs 3:19

Proverbs 24:5

Guided Power

“To turn things around, you may have to experience the sort of encounter that Moses had.”

Our ability to succeed is certain. But it can only come into effect when we maximize the power within us. To effectively use your innate power, you will have to learn how to use it. While there are several ways of becoming powerful, one of the best methods is the one that worked for Moses. As a privileged Jew in Pharaoh’s palace, Moses had tried to “acquire” power by force. But it didn’t work. When he secretly killed an Egyptian who was maltreating a Jew, instead of gaining the respect of his people, he was mocked and then he found himself on exile.

Like Moses, perhaps you feel disappointed. To turn things around, you may have to experience the sort of encounter Moses had. Even though, God has already equipped us with the power to succeed, He still wants to guide us. Remember when Moses met God at the burning bush, he was instructed to return to Egypt and deliver the very people he once tried to rescue. But this time, Moses was charged to use his abilities through the guidance of God’s Spirit. May you also have an encounter that would revive the power within you.

Prayer/Confession: LORD, I need an encounter that would revive the potential you have deposited in me, in Jesus name. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Exodus 2:11-15

Ephesians 3:20

Isaiah 40:29

The Power to Choose

“Choose God’s way.”

Paul said, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In simple terms, the Bible contain God’s thoughts, which is designed to enable us do great exploits. But while the ideas on how to live an effective life comes from God, the *decision* on whether to use it or not is made by man. Although God’s desire is for us to rely on His word, He does not impose His will on us.

The power to choose for ourselves originated at creation when God said, “Let us create man in our image... **And let them rule.**” Also, notice that in the *Lord’s Prayer*, Jesus instructs us to *invite* God’s kingdom unto the earth. Therefore, it is our job to seek God’s will. In the story of the prodigal child, you would notice that the father didn’t object when the younger son chose to leave home. When he eventually returned, the father also didn’t disagree. At every point, it was the son who chose *what he wanted*. My prayer for you today is to choose God’s way.

Prayer/Confession: I choose to be instructed in the House of the Lord.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Genesis 1:26-28

Matthew 18:18

Creativity is Power

“It takes knowledge to **create** anything.”

Creativity is required in every business. For example, Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart Stores used a creative business formula which most retailers ignore. He bought a variety of products in bulk across his network of stores so he could pass savings on to his customers. As a result, people flocked to his stores. Fortunately, everyone can be creative. You may not be creative in your current work, but there’s a place you can be creative. If you are engaged in a work that you think has to do with your calling, and you are finding it difficult to be creative, then learn from the Creator of the universe.

God made the heavens and earth by His *understanding* (Proverbs 3:19). That is, *by His knowledge, God created* the heavens and the earth. So, He didn’t just create the heavens and the earth with His word. To create the earth, God had to use His knowledge and *understanding*. You see, knowledge is the ingredient for creating anything in life. You can’t invent a product with an empty brain. Creative individuals are those who have filled their minds with knowledge. We use knowledge to create. DON’T try to acquire power. Rather, acquire knowledge.

Prayer/Confession: Lord Jesus, teach me how to use my gifts of wisdom and understanding to create wealth.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Proverbs 3:19

Like Fruit Trees

“Becoming fruitful is key because it attracts God’s favor.”

Fruit trees are endowed with seeds that produce fruits for **other people’s benefit**. They DO NOT eat their own fruit. Instead, they serve others with it. Like fruit trees, man was created to be fruitful. Like fruit trees, humans are blessed with the ability to bear fruit with their talents and skills. But while we are ALL gifted, not many of us become fruitful in the end. That is, we don’t often serve others with our gifts. For example, a person may be gifted in singing, but would never sing to an audience.

When you are the only one who enjoys your gift, then you aren’t fruitful. Being fruitful attracts God’s favor. Jesus said, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and **every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit**”. For this reason, you can become powerful by feeding others with your gift. For instance, Joseph was a man gifted in interpreting dreams. Signs that he was gifted was revealed when as a young boy, he began to have dreams about his future. But He didn’t become a powerful and influential person until he used his gift to serve others.

Prayer/Confession: Because I was created to be fruitful, I’ll bear good fruit in every area of my life, in Jesus Name.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

John 15:2

Genesis 1:1-28

The Fruitful Leader

“God rewards and refreshes those who refresh others with their gifts.”

Most times, leaders who fail to effectively serve their people do it on purpose. They might say, “If I empower my people, they will become too powerful and eventually feel we are equals.” What they don’t know is that they can benefit a lot more when they truly serve others. But as long as leaders are unaware of the benefits of serving others, they would keep oppressing their people. For leaders to recognize the importance of serving others, they must first of all, know its benefits. Contrary to popular belief, empowering others does not “disempower” the leader.

The book of Proverb says, “A generous person will prosper; **whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.**” To refresh others simply means to **revitalize** them. Leaders revitalize their people through service. Therefore, a true leader is like a fruit tree. Do you know that humans who benefit from fruit trees don’t pay the trees for their services? Actually, fruit trees serve humans, at no charge. But then, the fruit tree is rewarded by God who provides the soil, rain and the sunlight that keeps it refreshed at every season. Similarly, God is the source and rewarder of those who refresh others with their gifts.

Prayer/Confession: Dear Lord, refresh me as I refresh others with my gifts.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Matthew 3:8

John 15:16

The Power to Serve

“Humility begets servanthood.”

Behind closed doors, most leaders don't like the idea of “servanthood” because it conjures feelings of bondage in their minds. They don't want to see their roles as burdensome because they've been conditioned to think by their cultures that leadership positions are comfort zones. But Jesus disagrees. Christ expects leaders to act as servants. One day, He said to His disciples, “The greatest among you will be your servant.” In other words, “the leader among you should be the servant”. This leadership philosophy is the key to becoming the most powerful person in any group or setting.

But we cannot become true leaders unless we humble ourselves. Jesus said, “whoever humbles himself will be exalted”. Christ recommends humility in leadership because it is the only way a leader can truly serve. If we are to go by the teachings of Christ, anyone who isn't willing to serve should simply stay away from any leadership position. But that's not what Jesus *actually* wants. Jesus wants us to be humble so we can be able to serve others. When we humble ourselves at every given situation, our self-interest is thrown out and replaced with a desire to meet the needs of others.

Prayer/Confession: Dear Lord, fill me up with a humble spirit. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Mathew 23:1-12

Matthew 24:45-47

Philippians 2:3

The Servant Leader

“A slave is forced to serve, but servants choose to serve.”

The term, “Servant leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in an essay that he first published in 1970, titled, *The Servant as Leader*. In that essay, Greenleaf began with the statement, “The servant-leader is servant first”. No doubt, the fundamental aspect of every area of leadership is service. While Greenleaf’s essay has made a great impact on present-day leadership, the principle of servant leadership is originally God’s idea. Think of Jesus Christ for example. For every problem He encountered, He saw it as an opportunity to serve.

Recall the story of how Jesus fed five thousand people. The disciples had said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.” His disciples saw the situation as a problem. But Jesus viewed it as an opportunity to serve. So He replied, “You give them something to eat.” With that statement, Jesus challenged the disciples to serve the people. The decision to serve others can be the best decision anyone can make. Serving others does make the leader become a servant but it DOESN’T make him a slave. Today, be *willing* to serve.

Prayer/Confession: Dear Lord, give me the courage be a servant leader. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Luke 22:26

Psalm 18:27

The Leader as Farmer

“The leader who acts as a servant sows into the lives of his people.”

In Genesis 8:22, God said “as long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease”. This is an undisputable law of success, which has been relied upon by the entire human race. In my research on some of the most influential people in history, I have seen how their careers evolved in accordance to the law of seedtime and harvest. Here’s my point: any leader who serves others is like a farmer who sows a seed. Just as the farmer sows, the leader also sows through service.

As a leader, you may sow by serving others with your ideas, money, time or gifts. You may not enjoy the process at the beginning because the rewards aren’t immediate. But like the farmer who waits for his seed to germinate, the leader who serves others, also has to wait for a while before the reward of his service will manifest. And just as a farmer reaps what he sows, the leader who serves will surely reap whatever he has sowed in people’s lives. Whether you are leading a small or big group, sow like a farmer.

Prayer/Confession: LORD, give me the seeds that I can use and sow into other people’s lives.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Ecclesiastes 11:6

Psalm 126

The Leader as Sower

“As long as you do not give up, you will eventually have people who would bear fruit with the seeds you’ve sowed in their lives.”

Jesus once shared a story of a farmer who went out to sow seeds. Although the farmer intended to sow all the seeds he had, some were lost. At first, some seeds fell on a path and were eaten by birds. Then, some seeds fell on rock and perished because they had no roots. Other seeds fell among thorns. At last, some seeds fell on good soil and reproduced. Though this story captures the challenges that prevent us from becoming fruitful with God’s word, **it is also a lesson for leaders who desire to build others.**

We can liken the seeds that were eaten by birds to those who immediately slip off our hands the moment we begin to sow into their lives. The seeds that fell on the rock can be matched with those who desire to grow but due to their history, they give up along the way. Then again, there are those who would desire to grow but their personal battles will chock them. These are the seeds among thorns.

However, in the end, you will have people who would bear fruit with the seeds you’ve sowed in their lives. These are the “seeds” on good soil.

Prayer/Confession: Lord, give me an enduring spirit. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Luke 8:4-15

Mark 4:1-8

That Hidden Message

“What are you doing with what you have received from God?”

During one of His teachings, Jesus said, “For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought to the open”. This was a reference to His messages. Interestingly, the statement captures what we do whenever we post letters. To post a letter, we **hide** our message inside an envelope. And like Jesus said, the **hidden** message is meant to be **disclosed**. However, it isn’t intended to stay hidden. The message is meant to be brought to the open when it gets to the receiver.

Jesus had wanted His disciples to realize it was their responsibility to unravel His messages. Just as the sender of an enclosed letter expects the receiver to unpack the hidden message, Jesus expects us to “unpack” His messages. What Christ has deposited in us is the message of the kingdom of God. On a deeper perspective, it can also be likened to the natural gifts He has buried in us. So, it is our duty to bring out our hidden potential. Inside every person is a hidden gift, which God has deposited. What are you doing with what you have received from God?

Prayer/Confession: Father, give me the wisdom and power to unravel and maximize the gifts you’ve given me. Amen.

**REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:
Mark 4:21-25**

Your Gift Matters!

“To be a great leader, you would have to commit yourself to doing something that is of great value to others.”

One day, Jesus embarked on a journey to the Sea, so He could have a quiet time. But a crowd of five thousand people followed Him. Although Jesus didn't invite any of them, they followed Him, all the way to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee. Now why would such a huge crowd of people, leave their comfort zones and follow Jesus to a deserted place? According to the scripture, the people had followed Jesus “because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick” (John 6:2).

To be powerful, you have to commit yourself to doing something that is of great value to others. People aren't going to follow you because they like your face. The Bible didn't say the people followed Jesus because they liked Him. They followed Him because He had something to offer. What you can offer is the main thing. The thousands that followed Jesus were mainly concerned with the miracles. What can you do that will be of great value to others? Your ability to discover your unique gifts, and then offer it to others will determine how relevant you would be to your generation. Focus on your gifts!

Prayer/Confession: Today, I shall focus on the gifts that I have been given by my Heavenly Father.

**REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:
Proverbs 18:16**

Becoming a Problem Solver

“The challenges before you aren’t unsolvable.”

The world is ruled by those with ideas on how to solve life’s biggest problems. Think of all the most successful people in history – most of them were known for solving problems. In the Bible, God didn’t “call” anyone unless there was a problem to solve. When God created Adam and Eve, He needed someone to manage the earth. When He called Noah, He needed him to build an ark. When He called Abraham, God wanted to establish a righteous nation. When God called Joseph, He needed a man who could solve an economic crisis. Then, He called Moses to solve slavery.

Jesus came to solve problems. In Luke 4:18-19, He stated what we might describe as His vision. In those two verses, Jesus revealed the problems he came to solve. Do you know that Christ’s disciples were specifically instructed to solve a problem? (Matthew 28:19-20). If you truly want to be powerful in any given area of life, become a problem solver. Find the problems in your country or community. Then work hard in creating solutions. It is God’s desire that we ALL manage the earth through our problem solving skills. Go out and solve a problem!

Prayer/Confession: Father, reveal to me the problem I was born to solve, in Jesus Name.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Matthew 28:19-20

Get Ready

“You need to prepare for God’s promises.”

In my trainings, I encourage people to spend more time on the principle of **intelligence**. This is the stage where you absorb all the information relevant to your **vision**. Without this process, you would lack the skills for achieving your vision. I learned this principle from the Bible. God does not release people to embark on any leadership task until He grooms them. When Jesus was 12 years old, his parents temporarily lost Him after they went to Jerusalem. After three days, He was found in the temple, sitting among teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Notice He wasn’t found in a farm, but in a temple – the place where He would later spend most of His time preaching. Most likely, Jesus spent his youthful years learning. In fact, He possibly spent over 18 years preparing Himself since we are told that He didn’t begin His ministry until He was 30. When you compare that period with the 3 years He spent on His ministry, you will realize that He invested more time preparing Himself than in the actual work. Preparation is key. Abraham Lincoln said, “I will study and prepare myself, and someday my chance will come.”

Prayer/Confession: Dear LORD, I will prepare and wait for your promises.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Luke 2:41-52

God's Training Camp

“Just as we enroll in a school in order to prepare ourselves for the future, God also enrolls us in His training program.”

Joseph was destined to be a Prime Minister. But he was a little boy who only knew how to run errands. To prepare him, God had to let him go through trials. First, his brothers sold him to a stranger. Next, his master's wife framed him. Then he found himself imprisoned, in a foreign country. In prison, a situation arose which made him become the leader he was born to be. So, when he reunited with his brothers, he said “God sent me before you”. At that moment, Joseph realized he had been a student in God's training camp.

God has a training program. Just as we enroll in school, God also enrolls us in His training program. In our schools, we pay money but in God's training camp, the cost is patience. But unlike schools, you may not understand the lessons in God's training camp until it's over. In the same way that your abilities were tested by your teachers, God also allows life to test you. In schools, it is after you've passed every test and exam that you would be deemed fit for graduation. Similarly, God will make sure you pass every trial before He promotes you.

Prayer/Confession: Father, give me the grace to pass every test, in Jesus Name. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Genesis 45:1-7

Psalm 105:12-22

1 Peter 4:12-13

Until You're Tested

“What you intend to do isn't what people want to hear but what you've already achieved.”

Years ago when I told people I wanted to launch an NGO, I didn't get the support I desired. Later, when my project was honored with an award, the same people who doubted me, showered praises on me. Too often, we want to be supported the moment we are about to launch a project. But if the idea is still in your head, you may not get the much-needed support because most people prefer to associate themselves with an idea that has been tested. What you intend to do isn't what people want to hear but what you've achieved.

When Saul was made king, some of his countrymen didn't like him because they didn't know what he could do. At that time, there was no record of Saul winning any battle. So, they saw him as an *idea* that hadn't been tested. But Saul was wise. He didn't try to convince them. Instead, he kept silent and waited for an opportunity. Soon afterwards, his people were threatened by Nahash, the Ammonite. Saul seized the opportunity and proved himself. After leading a successful war against the Ammonites, the same people who once despised him reaffirmed his kingship.

Wait until you're tested.

Prayer/Confession: Lord Jesus, give me the chance to prove my critics wrong through my achievements. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

1 Samuel 11: 1-15

Premature Celebrity

“Stay close to God.”

After David killed Goliath, news about him spread. People were amazed at the way he killed Goliath with a stone. And as David’s fame grew, some women popped up with a praise song that placed him above his master, King Saul. Because of that song, David had to run for his life. But the negative impact of the women’s song extended to other kingdoms. When David sought refuge in king Achish’s kingdom, his servants reminded him that he was dealing with a man whom they sang about. To save his life, David pretended he was mad whenever he was with king Achish.

There are times you might achieve something remarkable while you are still on your way to the top. The people around you will get excited and begin to celebrate you. Their praises will then create enemies who feel threatened. And so, they would try to stop you. Instead of moving forward, you would at that time become stuck; struggling to survive. If you ever find yourself in this kind of state, do what David did; stay close to God. I pray that God will frustrate the plans of those who feel threatened by your success.

Prayer/Confession: Father, frustrate the plans of my adversaries. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

1 Samuel 21:10-15

1 Samuel 18: 6-9

Keep Working!

“If you are not persistent, setbacks will make you quit.”

We are oftentimes encouraged to be persistent because of the challenges we are bound to face. No matter how talented you are; you are going to incur obstacles as you carry out your work. There might be moments you would doubt yourself and even wonder if you are on the right track. During such moments, you will be tempted to give up. Surely, without persistence, you will quit. To be tenacious, you have to pursue your goals daily. The little steps you take each day will mount up and force its way, pulling you out of any crisis.

Paul knew this principle. In his letter to Timothy, he said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the good faith.” From the statement, Paul was acknowledging the fact that his journey was a battle, but like a sportsman, he was persistent. In the book of Acts, there was also an incident where Paul entered a synagogue and preached for three months. Then some people opposed him. But He didn't quit. Instead, he took his audience and went to a different hall, where he preached **DAILY** for two years. Like Paul, don't stop; keep working!

Prayer/Confession: Father, give me the strength to keep working on my goals. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Acts 19:8-10

Be Unstoppable!

“Keep your mind focused on your goals.”

One day, some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.” Normally, that statement was enough to put fear in His heart. But Jesus replied, “Go tell that fox, I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day **I will reach my goal (Luke 13:31-32-NIV)**”. In other words, Jesus made them realize He was unstoppable. Clearly, Jesus didn’t allow challenges, fear or intimidation to stop Him from fulfilling His goal. He was unstoppable!

Although, He was a miracle worker, Jesus had to face challenges. He had to confront Satan before fulfilling His purpose. *Think*. If Satan would have the audacity to attack Jesus, He would do the same thing to anyone. And no matter who you are, whether you are saved or not, Satan will come at you with all sorts of tricks aimed at stopping you from doing God’s will. To overcome the devil, do what Jesus did: **Keep your mind focused on your goals**. Make up your mind about the goal you have in mind. Say to yourself: **No matter the troubles before me, I’ll fulfill God’s will.**

Prayer/Confession: LORD, I am determined to do Your will. Help me win my battles.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Luke 13:31-32

Children in Market Places

“Someone’s opinion about you doesn’t have to become your reality.”

One day, Jesus compared the attitude of the Pharisees to a situation in the marketplace where some children complained because they played a flute but the people didn’t dance. And when they sang a funeral song, the people also didn’t mourn. When Jesus made that statement, He was concerned with the way the Pharisees had responded to His ministry and that of John the Baptist. Recall that when John showed up, he spoke of the Kingdom of God, drank no wine and lived in the wilds, eating locusts. The Pharisees didn’t see him as one of them and so they called him a “demon”.

Jesus on the other hand, ate with the people and even mingled with “sinners” as He preached the same message of the Kingdom. He too was criticized by the Scribes. But despite the condemnations, John and Jesus succeeded in the end. By nature, leaders stand out because they are driven by a sense of purpose. Purpose is what sets people apart. A purpose-driven life is oftentimes distinctive. Realize that you will be misunderstood by the people around you. But that shouldn’t stop you. Keep moving forward. You too will succeed in spite of the criticisms.

Prayer/Confession: By the grace of God, I’ll keep moving forward.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Matthew 3:1-2

Matthew 4:12-17

Use Both Hands

“Focus on one thing at a time.”

The late Benjamin Burombo, Zimbabwean Labor Union Leader, once said, “Each time I want to fight for African rights, I use only one hand, because the other hand is busy trying to keep away Africans who are fighting me.” The very people he was fighting for, became his distractors. In reality, His “busy hands” is a symbolic representation of his mind. So, the Zimbabwean activist couldn’t focus on his goal because his mind was going in different directions at the same time. In other words, he wasn’t single-minded.

To be honest, you can’t achieve your objectives by throwing your hands in different directions. You will need to use both hands in order to achieve a single objective. Unless if you have only one hand, your two hands have to be focused one thing. To use each of your hands, and try to achieve two different things at the same time is a perfect recipe for failure. To achieve anything worthwhile, you need to be focused. To go far in life, focus on one thing at a time. I like the way the scripture puts it, “Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you” (Proverbs 4:25).

Prayer/Confession: My eyes are fixed on doing Your will, LORD.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Proverbs 4:25-26

1 Corinthians 7:20

Stay Focused

“To fulfill any leadership task, stay focused on the big picture.”

"Master," John said, **"we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us"**. John was probably trying to protect the integrity of his Master. John must have felt the person was an impostor. But Jesus had a different opinion because He said, **"Do not stop him"**. John must have been an overprotective disciple because shortly after that incident, he and his brother, James wanted to call fire down from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village because they did not welcome Jesus. Again, Christ rebuked them.

From the two incidents, you would notice that Jesus was someone who avoided distractions. Stopping the stranger who was casting out demons in His name wasn't part of His assignment. In the same vein, why should He worry about the rude Samaritans when their antagonism wouldn't stop Him from traveling through another village? As at the time that Jesus wanted to pass through the Samaritan village, He had already made up His mind to go to Jerusalem because it was time **"for him to be taken up to heaven"** (Luke 9:51). To fulfill any leadership task, stay focused on the big picture.

Prayer/Confession: Oh LORD, give me the strength to stay focused.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Luke 9:49-55

Stay on Track

“Recognize that not every solution is right.”

While Paul and Silas were evangelizing, they got arrested. Confined in a prison cell, they began to worship God. Suddenly, a violent earthquake broke the prison doors. When the prison officer saw what happened, he tried to end his life, thinking the prisoners had escaped. But Paul stopped him. One interesting thing about this story is the way Paul and Silas stayed focused on the big picture. The normal thing to do after the prison doors opened was to run. But they ignored the opportunity and decided to stay, taking advantage of the chance it gave them to gain new converts.

In your quest to realize your dreams, opportunities will come to you in several ways. But beware: NOT every opportunity is right. Realize that you may be given an opportunity that is good, but not right. Such opportunities might come to you as a counsel that appears to be sensible, but wrong. It happened to David when he found King Saul sleeping and Abishai (David’s assistant) saw it as an opportunity to “pin Saul to the ground with a spear.” But that was an opportunity that would have gotten David off track. Today, stay focused on the big picture.

Prayer/Confession: LORD, help me make the right decisions.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

1 Samuel 26:1-10

The Power of a Focused Mind

“Your mind actually determines the direction of your mental and physical strength.”

When Moses gave his farewell address in the book of Deuteronomy, he told the army, not to give way to panic whenever they were about to fight. Then He said; **“The officers shall say to the army: Has anyone built a new house and not dedicated it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may dedicate it” (Deuteronomy 20:5).** Why did he say that? Moses knew that if a soldier goes into a battle with thoughts of an unfinished project in his mind, he will be unable to face the enemy. Where your mind goes, is the very place your energy will go.

If your mind isn't focused on how to confront challenges, you would find it hard to succeed. To overcome adversity, your mind needs to be focused, even if it seems there's no hope. Realize that every battle begins in the mind. To put it simply, your mind determines the direction of your spiritual and physical being. The real influencer is the mind; not the body. Whatever you have ever done with your body, was first of all, decided in your mind. Today, clean up the negative thoughts in your mind.

Prayer/Confession: My mind is focused on those things I desire to achieve.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Deuteronomy 20 :2-8

Proverbs 23:7

Do it Yourself

“Don’t just expect a miracle; use the authority you have.”

The miracles that God performed while He was taking the Israelites to the Promised Land were often as a result of an urgent need. When they were unprepared to fight, God divided the red sea; when the Israelites were thirsty and there was no well, He brought out water from a rock; when they were hungry and unprepared to farm, God gave them manna. Equally, the miracles that Jesus performed were often due to an urgent need. For instance, the first miracle – turning of water into wine was done to solve an urgent need. But there were other reasons, such as the compassion, He had for the people.

Jesus had to perform certain miracles by Himself because, at the time, the Church hadn’t been born. But when the Holy Spirit came, we became empowered to continue His work of performing miracles. While miracles come from God, it is important for us to know that God also expects us to play a vital role in the process. As believers, we can take authority and do miraculous things with the abilities that God has already given us. Don’t just expect a miracle, use the authority you’ve been given to do miraculous things.

Prayer/Confession: Father, use me for signs and wonders. Amen.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

John 2:1-11

Matthew 15:22-28

It's Up to You

“You have a powerful mind.”

Unknown to many, most of the challenges that confront humans can be conquered through the effective use of our mental, physical and spiritual gifts. We have the power to take over leadership spaces and become the leaders we were born to be. But instead of making use of our gifts, we keep going to God asking Him to do for us what we can do for ourselves. We fail to realize that we've already been equipped with **the power to succeed**.

There are Christians who wouldn't mind to ask Jesus to do **everything** for them. Instead of serving Him, they would rather have Him serve them. If that is what is expected of Christ, then why did He say to His disciples, **“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19)**. If it is His job to do EVERYTHING for us, why did He give us the keys? Since He has given us the **keys**, we are all expected to take charge over life's challenges. You have a powerful mind inside of you. Use it.

Prayer/Confession: Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me the keys to Your Kingdom.

REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDY:

Matthew 17:20

Shepherd Daily Devotional – The Power to Succeed

Feb 2022

If you would like to accept Christ as your personal Lord and savior, please say this prayer:

Heavenly Father, I come to you today in the name of Jesus. I believe that your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ died for me on the cross. I repent of my sins. Lord Jesus, come into my heart and be my personal savior. I am now willing to follow you. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Congratulations!

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About the Author

Ben Dankaka is the founder of Global Leaders & Readers Club (G.L.R.C), an NGO that promotes reading culture and leadership development. Since 2008, Dankaka has trained thousands through his NGO. He has over ten (10) years of work experience in social development. In 2008, he served as member of the Debate to Action, Nigeria (Kaduna Cluster), a British Council and World Bank Initiative aimed at youth leaders in East and West Africa and the United Kingdom.

Dankaka's ongoing efforts to support Nigerian communities have been recognized with two major international honors. One was an invitation to reduce the world's number of out-of-school children by serving as one of 500 "A World at School" Global Youth Ambassadors. The other was a prestigious Mandela Washington Fellowship through the US Department of State. The Fellowship supported Mr. Dankaka for six weeks of study in Public Management at Virginia Commonwealth University, in Richmond, in the USA. At the Fellowship's conclusion, Mr. Dankaka attended a Presidential Summit in Washington where he was honored by Barak Obama for his leadership.