

This book is a must-read for students -especially
those seeking excellence in
their academics

*Kayode O. Adebawale, Professor of Industrial Chemistry
and Vice Chancellor, University of Ibadan*



Foreword by Prof. Abel Olorunnisola

ATTAINING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:

Becoming An Invincible Academic Reference

SAMUEL AYINDE

ATTAINING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

...becoming an invincible academic
reference

Samuel Ayinde

COMMENTS ON ATTAINING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

This book is about how to make success in academics. The author's experience and testimony clearly put this in the right perspective. This book is a must-read for students—especially those seeking excellence in academics.

***Kayode O Adebowale,
Professor of Industrial Chemistry & Vice Chancellor,
University of Ibadan***

This book is an inspired masterpiece for all students who desire to give glory to God in their academic pursuit as Daniel did. I recommend this book for all students. I also recommend that they should seek God's kingdom and his righteousness and all other things shall follow suite.

***Professor Gideon Adeoye,
Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Ibadan***

This nugget could only come from him whom the Lord has brought to the experience, I am particularly happy that he readily shares this knowledge with mankind. Read, digest, and apply to your daily living and see excellence coming your way.

Dr F.K Owofadeju,
Wood Products Engineering, University of Ibadan

Samuel Ayinde has displayed a high level of intellectual prowess. He has combined academic and spiritual knowledge to admonish the whole world to be optimistic in all their endeavour, to be the best and never to have a fatalistic mentality in difficulties. I recommend this book for every potential achiever to read through.

Reverend Lekan Oladimeji
Presiding Pastor, Divine Faith Church of Christ, Nigeria

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Academic Reference
by Samuel Ayinde

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For making all things to work together for my good. May you be forever praised.

To

The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit

Thank you so much for being my All-In-All

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FOREWORD

I am highly delighted to be called upon to write foreword to this book written by a final year student for other students like him. Samuel Ayinde has made a very good effort at distilling the essence of successful academic career in this book. The summary of what he has to say is that attitude more than aptitude determines altitude.

I commend the author for a job well done and I recommend the book for all students who wish to make success of their academic career.

Professor Abel Olorunnisola,

**Head, Department of Wood Products Engineering and
Former Dean, Postgraduate School, University of Ibadan;
and Former Chairman, Nigeria Society of Engineers, Oyo
State Chapter, Nigeria**

INTRODUCTION

The academic community consists of several average and poor performers sandwiched with scanty high-flying students. "Is God not really partial?" Has the question ever crossed your mind? Do you believe that some people were born genius? Do you feel that some students are too brilliant to be outrun? Have you thought that you can never be the best? Have you asserted that academic excellence is a manifestation of a gift which is not present in everybody? Have you ever seen yourself as a nonentity, an average, a mediocre or a confused person? Have you concluded that you can never cross a border of excellence?

Do you believe that you have a limited ability, assimilation limit or a constrained understanding? Have you thought that you do not have what it takes to be outstanding? Have you affirmed that academic excellence depends on fate? Do you see failure as an unavoidable occurrence? Do you feel that poor performance is hereditary? Have circumstances labelled you defeated, failure, dullard or incapable? Do you think that it is impossible to score hundred percent in examinations? Do you believe that some academic challenges are too difficult to be overcome? Have you hung up to fate? Have you surrendered to defeat? Have you ever been disappointed academically, expecting a better result but not getting it? Do you have any academic challenge?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions, it is required that you settle down to read, assimilate and digest every word of this book. Perhaps you answered "no" to all the questions, there are secret truths equally awaiting your exploration in every chapter of this book. In this regard I congratulate you as you maximally explore some greatness-propelling truth which you need in life.

You are loaded

Except you know who you are, you will amount to nothing. The best evaluation of yourself can be done by you. The tools to become outstanding are inherent within you. Your knowledge of their existence, ability to harness them and maximize their usage makes the difference between you and others. Exceptional abilities to become the exceptional is in you, but it requires you to maximize it before it will bring you out as the exceptional. You are more than what you think you are, but you will never perform better than your picture of you. Your self-image determines what you will amount to. You are not a dullard until you reason as one, act as one, produce results as one and refuse to change to be one. If you maximize your in-built success potency, you can have better success. Success potency, however, responds sharply when you consciously take these steps: *see, plan, strike and pray the possibility*.

1. See the possibility

Until you start seeing impossibility as a blend from two words “impo” – important and “ssibility” – possibility, you can never go far. The greater you see, the greater you explore, the greater you harness, the greater you become. Ability to see possibilities out of impossibilities characterizes great inventors and incomparable scholars. It also separates them from the company of the complacent. Except you see sense in nonsense, you can never sense greatness in nonsense. This is because the majority of what brings greatness is packaged in what people call nonsense.

In academics, you must see the possibility of becoming outstanding in your course of study before you can become the celebrated outstanding. All that you need to overcome academic challenges are within and around you. However, you must see excellence before it is unveiled. You can overcome barriers, break through obstructions and fly high if you wait a moment and see the possibility.

2. Plan the possibility

An unplanned life is a fruitless life. Seeing without planning is equivalent to not seeing at all. The step of faith you take after seeing is planning. It shows that you have a great faith that what you see is a reality that will manifest. It is expedient that you put pen to paper and draw a feasible sketch of how you will become what you see. Planning involves evaluating the sacrifice you will make and the price you will pay to achieve your ambitions. By planning, you know what to bid goodbye to welcome outstanding excellence. To become an invincible academic reference, it is important that you plan.

3. Strike the possibility

Except the paperwork of planning is acted upon, it remains redundant and useless. To achieve this, you must muster your strength and potentials. You must put in your totality. You must swim against every current of procrastination, complacency, suffering-in-silence and laziness. You must put on the whole armor of zeal, hard work, fearlessness, hope and optimism as you sow physical effort into your academics through effective and efficient studying. In Physics, work done is a product of force and distance. If force is 100 Newtons and distance travelled by the applied force is 0 kilometer, work done will remain ZERO.

4. Pray the possibility

Horses must be made ready for the battle, but the victory is in God's hand. Prayer presents us humbly before our Maker. Through fervent prayers we surrender our insufficiency to Him to appropriate its sufficiency. We cause the natural to work in harmony with the supernatural and take possession of our inheritance: outstanding excellence. We subdue contradictory forces, harness the grace to work harder and achieve greatly on the platform of prayer.

These four steps which will be comprehensively discussed in this book have been tested, proven adequate and sufficient to become outstanding in every work of life, including academics. I strongly believe that as you read through the pages of this book, you will be transformed, strengthened, lifted and blessed.

Samuel Ayinde
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CHAPTER 1: REFERENCES EXPLAINED

Every person is a potential point of reference for excellence. The divine input in everyone spurs them towards becoming exceptional. The *Longman Active Study Dictionary* (Eighth impression) defines reference as “the place you get information from or where you look at something for information.” The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (Seventh Edition) also defines reference as “the thing you say or write that mentions somebody or something.” The Bible makes use of the word “reference,” (a synonym for reference, as used in this book, is standard), many times, both directly and indirectly.

CLASSIFICATION OF REFERENCES

1. LEADERSHIP REFERENCE

Saul was the first king to rule Israel. After his reign, David ascended the throne. David’s kingship was established as a standard of comparison for all other kings that came after him, be it in Judah or Israel. For example, it was recorded concerning Amaziah King of Judah, “He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father David had done.”^[1] This type of reference is called leadership reference. His rule became a standard throughout the entire nation, against which other reigns were measured and graded as excellent good, fair, or poor.

2. MENTAL REFERENCE

History has recorded a list of people who had demonstrated exceptional and unique level of wisdom, insight, ability and prowess; such qualities have been used to construct a measuring scale against which the display of exceptional capability by people is being measured today. They towered from the level of *extra-ordinary* to that of being uniquely *extraordinary*. As a result, they were taken to be the climax and also, the upper limit. The Scripture gave this insight into wisdom of King Solomon of Ancient Israel: "Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations."^[2]

Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda and were wise men. They were very vast in exhibiting sound wisdom and discretion. Nevertheless, there was a standard by which their wisdom was measured. This standard was constructed using King Solomon's display of wisdom. This is because he was the wisest man that has ever lived in his time. In other words, King Solomon, a man like us, was a mental reference. Other great researchers in the light of Sir Isaac Newton, Leonard Nicholas Sadi Carnot, Galileo, Albert Einstein, to mention a few, were also exceptional in their fields of specialization.

3. SPIRITUAL REFERENCE

The exceptional walk some people had with God made them to be established as standards for quantifying and comparing spiritual exploits. Their names are mentioned whenever spiritual issues are discussed. They went all the way in their exceptional walk with God and consequently, they became too exceptional for their generation and the ones coming behind them. Though men, they distinguished themselves by becoming exceptional. Moses was such a reference: The Lord said, ""...Listen to my words: "When there is a

prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"[3]

There is a mark of distinction between Moses and other Prophets of God. God conversed with all other Prophets using diverse means other than face to face, while Moses conversed with the Lord face to face, mouth to mouth. That means Moses established the standard of communication between the Creator and His creatures. The highest level a person can attain, (which Moses did), is to see God and communicate with Him face to face. Consequently, when hearing God is a subject of discourse in Moses' days, Moses' technique is a standard instrument through which other peoples' communication with God can be measured. In other words, Moses was a reference.

Concerning Prophet Samuel, it was recorded that none of his words fell to the ground[4]. Every word spoken by him, consciously or unconsciously, came to pass. The highest that can happen to a man is to speak and have all the words spoken fulfilled. That was Samuel's case. He was an instrument with which the authenticity and truthfulness of people who say, "The Lord said..." is measured. He operated on the dimension of a hundred percent word-accomplishment. Consequently, when it comes to issues such as prophecy, speaking and having it come to pass, Samuel has become an established point of reference till date.

4. ACADEMIC REFERENCE

The race of life can be said to be academic-oriented. This is because we learn daily. One stops learning the day they die. The converse is also true, one dies the day one stops learning. The backing of God in the life of a Christian scholar is partly revealed through his academic performance. In the light of this, one could safely assert that it is the desire of God that his people should excel

academically. People like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Apostle Paul were established references in the sphere of academics; the leading Light, of course in this sphere, is Jesus Christ. John Pullock, in his book titled ***The Apostle: The life of Paul***, made it clear that not only was Apostle Paul brilliant, intelligent, and exceptional but that he was also a versatile scholar. This was evident in his ministerial calling and can be seen in his written epistles.

When Daniel and his friends were tested after receiving the Babylonians training, they were found to be ten times better than their contemporaries who were subjected to the same academic conditions. Jesus Christ was preferred to the Teachers of the Law in his day because of the unique academic prowess displayed by Him. Today, a few people have made landmark records which no one has been able to break and have thus established themselves as references in academic endeavor as a result of their distinct performances.

5. INVINCIBLE ACADEMIC REFERENCE

Ancient landmarks and landform features like mountains, valleys, hills and rocks are figuratively used as references in the scriptures. A mountain can be used as a reference to locate all other places surrounding it. For instance, if a location is described as this: Town A is 11km, N45°W from Mount Everest, this means that the exact location of Town A could be known. All that is needed is to carry the measuring instruments to Mount Everest and measure out accordingly. And the advent of Geographic Information System (GIS) in modern times has made this easier.

Every Christian who puts his trust in God is described as Mount Zion (an outstanding reference) which can never be shaken^[5]. In other words, such a Christian is regarded as invincible and forever enduring. Biblically, therefore, it is believed that you are configured to be a standard in all spheres of life, including academic pursuit. Junior colleagues should be able to build excellence-oriented confidence when they check through your results.

Your academics should constantly reflect the promise of “good success” which has been made in the Bible to all who do according to all that is written in the book of the law (Joshua 1:8). Your success should not be the type in which you perform very well in a session but the following session you are nowhere to be found. You must be invincible. Success must be consistent and continuous.

This book will focus comprehensively on how to become an invincible academic reference.

SECTION 1: SEE THE POSSIBILITY



CHAPTER 2: PREAMBLE TO “SEE THE POSSIBILITY”

It is very easy to see a possibility amid several possibilities. This act is so common that anybody can partake in it; the fearful, the doubtful, the poor, the timid and even the inconsistent can bring a possibility out of several possibilities. This then presupposes that bringing a possibility out of so many possibilities is not an appropriate yardstick for measuring how determined or how strong someone is.

The yardstick for measuring how tenacious, consistent, determined, focused and ambitious someone is, is their ability to see **possibility** out of **impossibilities**. It is a strong force that pulls down every wall of stagnation. It is a traffic light pointing towards becoming successful in life. It is an unquantifiable quality that ushers in academic excellence.

Life is surrounded by clouds of impossibilities and this makes a lot of people live and operate in a confused state. It is only those who can eke out **possibilities** out of **impossibilities** that make head way in life. These are people who not only have two eyes, but see clearly with them; for there are many who have eyes but operate as if they were blind.

Now, let's look at some of the clouds of impossibilities that may surround us academically and which may pose very serious challenges in that regard. A student will encounter courses or subjects that may appear tough and difficult to understand and which will question their tenacity and strength. Apart from this, examination timetables may not always be favorable and not all lecturers or tutors will always be friendly or approachable; some will pose some threats. Of course, there will be some not-too-pleasing

anecdotes from some former students which might reinforce these fears.

Other clouds of impossibilities may include school facilities and environment which may not be conducive for learning, unfriendly roommates or truncated financial supply. You might even be saddled with friends whose influence might not impact positively on your academics. Like me (during my undergrad), you might find yourself enmeshed in a course you never dreamt of studying. The list of impossibilities and discouraging factors are endless.

Despite all these though, you must strive to weave a thread through these clouds of impossibilities; but it takes tenacity. As stated above, you must be tenacious, consistent, determined, focused and ambitious to excel and exceptionally so to see the possibilities in the midst of discouragement. This is a confirmed fact: Amid impossibilities lies a strong cord of possibility. This is the hallmark of the Supremacy of the Divine force at work in you. Today is the future you thought about a few years back. Regardless of your current position academically, you can still move up and become outstanding. All you need do is take a time out and see yourself entering the reality of that fact.

CHAPTER 3: SIGHTING POSSIBILITIES: A CASE STUDY OF DAVID

David lost no battle during his reign as king in Israel. At an early age, he fought the great Philistine giant and killed him with a seemingly insignificant weapon—a sling and a stone. He wrote death sentences for as many lions as possible whenever they went past their boundaries. He counted it a sin for bears to come terrorizing and go scot-free. God called him a man after His very heart. He envisaged building a magnificent structure that was worth millions of dollars for God and he made total provisions (in terms of resources) for it. His son Solomon only came along to build on the foundation David had laid.

He was not only great, he also transferred the greatness in him into the lives of many—the mighty men of David. The only war he did not win was the one he did not fight. He became like a lion, a mighty beast that retreats before nothing^[6]. Apart from being a powerful warrior and king, he was also a singer, prophet, a diplomat and, the father of the wisest man on earth (Solomon). Let us now consider the secret of his outstanding feat.

THE SECRET OF DAVID

At times, we are moved by what we hear. But most of the time, we are driven, propelled and energized by what we see. We may believe what we hear, and become what we see, depending on how strong the influence is of what we hear or see. It also depends on our perception of the rightness or wrongness of these acts.

In the case of David he was able to do exploits despite some of his human failings because, all along, he had the right perception about God—he saw Him as the Almighty, a Supernatural Being who has no iota of impossibility in His character^[7]—whom David had always seen before him^[8]. And throughout his lifetime, he positioned the reality of this “God of Possibility” before him; as a result, the first thing he saw whenever he opened his eyes was possibility. The last thing he saw before sleeping was possibility. In his entire endeavor all he saw was possibility. No wonder he had an exceptional record of a hundred percent victory.

Now, let’s take it to a personal level with regards to academic endeavor. Your ability to visualize yourself as a student in your school was what propelled you into obtaining appropriate forms, writing the appropriate exams, passing the exams and in the long run securing a provisional admission into the school (institution). In this sense, what you see is what you become. Having gone through the aforementioned process, you have become what you saw. You are now in the processes of becoming what you are seeing, and will eventually become what you would see in the future. It is a universal truth.

✓ **Wisdom speaks:**

All men are the product of vision and imagination. Therefore, you can’t grow beyond your vision. God conceived man before He made him. He saw beforehand what man would do (rule), what he would look like (god), and what he would be called (man). Man was not made by chance; man is a product of vision and imagination. This is also true of life and success—you must see continuously what you aim to be or achieve. As a result, you position yourself well to achieve your dream. See greatly and think deeply. Be your own seer for a greater tomorrow!

Those who create an atmosphere of possibilities around themselves are never hemmed in by impossibilities. It is an

abomination! It takes a man who is obsessed with the Spirit of possibility to fight a warrior who is fifty times more skillful and equipped than he is. David won his battles because he made it a habit to always inquire from the Author of possibilities (God) before setting out. He inquired not because he thought he would not win, but he did so in order to know the direction the battle would go and what strategy of attack to apply. He fearlessly brought every raging situation under his control, because he always saw possibility.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU SEE

“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”^[9] This is an indisputable mystery: one becomes the exact replica of what one sees. Your current state reflects what you saw in past, consciously or unconsciously. This is both a lesson and an assurance of hope. It is a lesson because we are taught that when it comes to seeing, we should not follow the multitude for the seeing of the multitude brings confusion and controversy. It is an assurance of hope because it gives us a unique opportunity to shift our view, and focus on the positive, right and excellent things in our academic pursuit, especially if our focus had been on things that were not so right or excellent in the past. “Finally...whatever is right...if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”^[10]

People do not become invincible references by fluke, they must first see it. You must first have a clear perception and view of what you desire before you can handle it. You can never possess what you cannot envisage with your inner eyes. Faith is defined as the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.^[11] So, faith is not faith except it contains elements that could be substantially and evidently seen with the inner and imaginative eyes. The first criterion required to become an excellent student therefore is this: **See the possibility.**

CHAPTER 4: THE POWER BEHIND POSSIBILITY SEEING

At the end of my first year in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, I took the fourth position in my class. The person who came first was on a first class. Those who came second and third were very close candidates for first class. Despite taking the fourth position, I found that I was significantly far from first class when compared to the first three. Conscious of the general saying in the academic community that, ***"The higher you go, the tougher it becomes;"*** I resolved to stand upon the foundation of God in order to correct this incongruous saying as regards a child of God.

I was faced with the reality of the slim chance I had of taking the position God has destined for me in His word—the head. Definitely, the people occupying the first three positions would not be careless enough to drop their guards and allow someone from the rear to overtake them. I was also confronted with the reality of the fact that their extraordinary performance in the first year underlined their brilliance and was also an indication that they had acclimatized to the new system in which we found ourselves. Despite this apparent edge that they had over the rest of us, I wasn't deterred. By the way, I did not have an intention of competing with any of them to take their position. Rather, I stepped out to compete with myself, to become whom the Word of God says I am—the head. I saw the possibility of moving up to first class grade and ultimately the first position in my class. And to the glory of God, I achieved it.

There is a power within you, if appropriately ignited, that will take you to wherever you truthfully and devotedly desire to be. I allowed

this power to be ignited in me. I started the following session in the University with the watchword of becoming outstanding.

Seeing the possibility ignites the latent extra strength in you to move far and fast. It unlocks the gate to the supply of the capability to excel. It naturally ushers in the divine intervention of the Supernatural. It harmonizes your decision with that of God and as a result, you unconsciously move at the same frequency with that of the Spirit of the Living God in you.

It also unveils the source of help to become exceptional and builds a strong confidence of invincibility within. It accelerates the mental capability to assimilate better than it has always been and automatically positions you on that pedestal which places you above every other person. It propels, energizes and influences your decision to major on the majors and minor on the minors. It guides you with regards to the kind of friends you should make and the company of people to keep. Generally, those who see a great deal of possibilities have many companions, a lot of colleagues but very few intimate friends.

✓ **Wisdom speaks:**

A great man will have many acquaintances, but a man of vision is hardly known by many. Every vision needs incubation, but a glory cannot hide itself. Between a vision and glory lies incubation. Incubation is done in the closet. If you have a vision, you must have a closet. It is there you work on your vision to make it real. It is there you enlarge what you see and see well what you have seen. It is there, like a craftsman, you will bring out that desired artifact from what you had seen. Avoid too many friends, it distracts. Run away from vision killers, they are friends who would not see what you see and would not help you to stay focused. Find your destiny builders. They are people of like minds, and are contributing to the realization of your God-given vision. Build with them. Incubate your dream together. With them your glory will rise.

The power behind seeing possibilities exerts a force which separates great thinkers and seers from common people. It makes you undaunted, formidable and insurmountable and positions you as a 'god' before common people while ushering in an unqualified excellence which nobody could imagine you getting. It is the power God used at creation to form everything we can see today. He used the potency of possibility seeing to call things that were not, as if they were. It is available for you too.

Possibility seeing does not disappoint if you are wise, committed, consistent and tenacious. It is a friend that will never leave you during difficulties and (a very close one at that) in time of confusion. It propels you to climb obstacles far higher than you as if you just walked over. It inputs extra strength, extra energy and extra potency to excel academically and in other spheres of life. It is an essential ingredient for achieving feats on the field of exploits. It is very pivotal in becoming an invincible academic reference.

CHAPTER 5: HOW TO SEE THE POSSIBILITY

Has it ever crossed your mind that some people are born naturally brilliant? Or that some people are born leaders, created to be followed by others? “Let them lead, and we will follow,” is usually the refrain from those who think they are not born leaders. Has the thought that some people are so sound they cannot be outrun ever crossed your mind? Or that the mental capabilities of some people are so naturally better than yours that you just cannot beat them? Has it also crossed your mind that you can never lead your class, seeing yourself as someone who is mentally deficient? And are you one of those students who believe that some lecturers are so difficult that no one would ever get a distinction in their class?

It is not a crime to have thoughts and questions as the ones above running through your mind. Situations and circumstances in which one finds oneself could attract such thoughts. However, thoughts and questions such as these are mere deception from the pit of hell. They are not true because they are not in accordance with the Divine plan for you.

Is it possible for one to have different images of oneself in a mirror? No. One sees the exact image of oneself when one looks into the mirror, not the image of something else. If God looks at the mirror what will He see? Is it a timid, fearful dullard? Definitely not! He will see God—the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth. That was what He saw at creation when He looked at Himself in the mirror; He then proceeded to make what He saw—you—the image of God;^[12] you are a god^[13].

Every person you think is extra special is configured the same way you were configured at creation. That person has become extra special because he has fanned aflame some latent extras which you have not thought necessary to fan aflame. The following steps if diligently followed would help channel the totality of your being towards **seeing the possibility**.

1. TRANSFORM YOUR MIND

The thought of being inferior (better put inferiority complex) is a veil that blindfolds a person and prevents them from seeing possibilities. Mind transformation propels you from seeing yourself as inferior, incapacitated and mentally deficient compared to another person who acknowledges that they have all it takes to be outstanding and instils boldness with which you can set out victoriously and achieve more than you have ever thought you could achieve. It gives you the confidence with which to see outstanding performers as ordinary human beings and hence approachable. It makes you a one-man-battalion capable of conquering every academic challenge that may arise.

✓ Wisdom speaks

After each day work of creation God saw all He made and, wow! They were all beautiful! He was delighted at the works of His hand, including you. He made you beautiful, and saw you so. If to God you are beautiful, why would you think less of yourself? God is the greatest Judge. Your personal judgment, even of yourself, is not true unless you see it in the light of God's own judgment. If God does not think less of you, because He has not made you less, then you should change your thought pattern about yourself. Don't limit yourself by what you wrongfully conceive about yourself. See in God's light what your true identity is. You might turn out to be the hero we have been waiting for.

A TRUE LIFE EXPERIENCE

University of Ibadan uses a seven-point grading system. A lady in my Department during undergrad, was on 3.9 (Second Class Lower Division) at the end of the third year. In the fourth year, she made a session result of 6.7 (First Class Session result) with which she climbed up to 4.2. An average student who used to have an average result got an A in all her courses except in two of the courses where she got “near A” grades. How did it happen? By fluke? No.

She allowed her mind to be transformed by appropriating and maximizing the inherent capability which hitherto had been latent in her. How? She got rid of the mindset that she was just an average student and broke through the mediocrity she had allowed herself to get hemmed in. The result was that she became one of the students with exceptional session results in the department. In addition to that, she was qualified for and received an award from the Dean of the Faculty of Technology.

Mind transformation is the first step towards seeing the possibility of becoming exceptional.

2. CLOSE YOUR EYES TO IMPOSSIBILITIES AND PAST UNFAVOURABLE EXPERIENCES

Until you ignore impossibilities, you can never think positively. Unless you let go of past experiences, you can never experience the newness of life. The Scripture says that the earth is covered with darkness^[14] which means the world is clouded with impossibilities. Despite this fact, we must ensure that such clouds do not hinder us from seeing the ever-present ray of hope. Unless you close your eyes to impossibilities, you cannot open them to see the reality of possibility.

Past unfavorable experiences have a way of affecting what we see and tend to influence our decision. You must, therefore, make a conscious effort to put the negative ones behind you. If you allow those experiences to linger, they will gradually incapacitate your mind, reduce your passion for excellence and bring about boredom.

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!”^[15]

Note the sequence: The former must in the first instance be got rid of, while the past must be excused out of memory before you can see a new, the great and mighty thing coming your way. We all have memories. To forget the past does not necessarily mean to experience a memory loss. It simply means that you should stop seeing yourself in a negative light but rather in a positive one. For instance, if you think you are a poor performer or a dullard you should stop viewing yourself in that light.

3. SEE THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

We are made in His image. His words are definitely a sure anchor that guarantees an infinite possibility in us. The word from the Author and Perfecter of possibilities will never fail. When you see through the mirror of His word, you can never see any impossibility. Some particular aspects of the Word are strictly meant for you; therefore, handle them in that order, that is, like they are strictly meant for you. Consider some of these Scriptures, paraphrased for easy memorizing.

- “Everything is possible for me because I believe.”^[16]
- “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.”^[17]
- “The Lord will make me the head, not the tail....I will always be at the top, never at the bottom.”^[18]
- “Whatever I decree shall be established...when people say that there is a casting down, I will say that there is a lifting up.”^[19]

Scriptures like these and many more should be read, meditated upon, assimilated, memorized, absorbed and spoken (always consciously) until it gets into the subconscious and can be recalled

with ease. God's words are flawless^[20]. They are real, powerful, reliable and sufficient. When they are wisely applied, they work. See through the light of the Word of God even when academic challenges surface. I have harnessed a lot of victories; conquered several battles, both academic and non-academic with the use of the word of God as a sure anchor. Why don't you also start using His word as a tool for academic excellence?

4. AVOID NEGATIVE CONFESSIONS AND FRIENDS

A student who sees possibilities will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful.^[21] He will consciously excuse himself from the midst of these people (whom I'd refer to as negative friends) if they refuse to excuse him.

Negative friends include:

- Those who abhor discussion centered on academic excellence
- Those who handle their academics lackadaisically
- Those who entertain distractions from their academics
- Those who believe that they cannot excel except through examination malpractices
- Those who start reading few days to examination
- The wayward, the immoral, the ungodly and those who are not taking responsibilities for their success

Don't spend time with those who fall under this category. Although you should be at peace with them, never let them be your intimate pals, as they will constitute a bad influence on you. These are people who do not know where they are going and whose destination is not clearly defined. They are distractions on your path to excellence, so avoid unnecessary closeness to them; otherwise you will also become one. Iron can only sharpen iron, it will not sharpen wood; iron will only create problems for wood. Carefully

discard friends of questionable character and avoid friendship with them; they journey on the road to failure. Do not be one with them. And if you are one already, let go of the way because it will be at your detriment and obstructs the flow of God's grace and favor in your life. Negative friends will do one thing for you: they will ruin you. So, excuse them!

✓ **Wisdom speaks**

A man of many days will not die young, and he who will eat last will not waste food. He that will be great will not be a companion of the fools. And a man of much glory will run away from worthless men. Take heed and beware, though time is unrenewable, yet what you do with it will be with you till your grave. Use it very wisely and invest in it. Be wise!

SECTION 2: PLAN THE POSSIBILITY



CHAPTER 6: PREAMBLE TO "PLAN THE POSSIBILITY"

Every man is an architect; our desires and capacity to plan are in-born. They are drawn from the attributes of God which are inherent in us (His creatures) who are made in His very likeness. Consciously or unconsciously, we plan every day and although some of us may not be aware of it, we are products of our plans.

GOD, THE GREAT PLANNER

God, the Omnipotent, is the master planner and this should let us realize the unique importance of planning. His name, Alpha and Omega reveals Him further as a great planner, who has designed what the end will look like right from the beginning. Everything that happens on earth is an integral part of His schedule; therefore, there is nothing that happens which takes Him unawares. Consider these Scriptures: "Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass..."^[22] and "The Lord has done what He planned; He has fulfilled His word, which He decreed long ago..."^[23]

Amid impossibilities he brings out possibilities. He is never caught unawares because He is a great planner. The total configuration of the earth is a product of what He planned some centuries ago. Satan's rebelliousness was frustrated because God had planned the whole thing ahead of time. The mightiness of God is encapsulated in His incomparable planning techniques.

GREAT ACHIEVERS, GREAT PLANNERS.

Every great achiever is a great planner. You cannot be greater than the plans you make. The height you will reach in life depends on how broad your horizon is and how wide your plans are. Having seen the possibility, go ahead then and plan in that light. If you cannot put down the possibility you see into a workable plan, then, it is not a reality. Whatever you described as too-big-to-plan-for will definitely be too big for you to implement or achieve. Simply put, it will be an illusion.

Planning the possibility can be defined as the process through which you move against the direction of impossibilities and draws up definite and workable techniques to achieve whatever you have seen possible. It is the paper representation of what you see. A student can never excel above his planning horizon. The extent of your achievement is the direct measure of your fervency at planning. People achieve great things because they draw up an exceptional layout of schedules and stick to them. The ability to plan and persevere distinguishes the great achievers from common people.

YOU MUST PLAN

Having envisaged a glorious possibility, it is expedient that a glorious realization is planned. It is essential that you devotedly and consciously draw out how your academic performance (and in the long run career path) will look like whenever you enter a new session or start your working life. You shape your life with the plan you make. "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."^[24] "To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue."^[25]

God expects you to plan and He in turn works on your plan to correct (if necessary) it and bring it to pass. You should write out the list of the courses you will take in a session and the results you desire to have in each of them. It is in the Divine agenda that we plan. In fact, it takes planning to become an invincible academic reference.

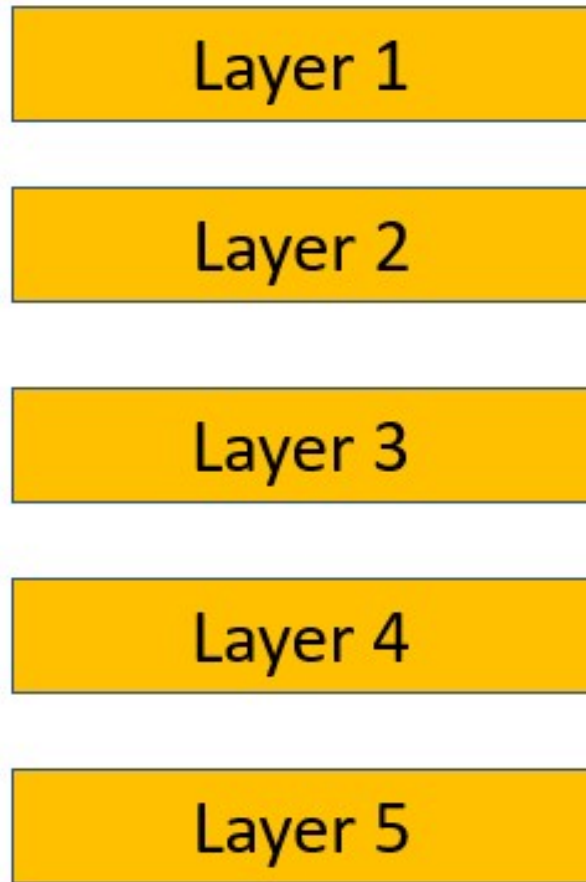
✓ **Wisdom speaks**

Your lack of planning is a sign that you don't yet have a vision. Every true vision drives. True vision has driving strength either for motion or restraint. True or genuine vision will not only cause you to plan, but will also stir you up to be disciplined and faithful to it. True people of vision are like the drunk, driven by what they saw and are ever obsessed to see it come true. Would you say you have a vision?

CHAPTER 7: LESSON FROM THE FIRMAMENT

“Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.”^[26]

A loaf of sliced bread gives a better description of how the body of water was arranged in the beginning. In this analogy, let's suppose that the layers of water have the potency to choose positions. Although they were all a body of water containing essentially hydrogen and oxygen, they were not on the same level. The diverse quality exhibited by each layer of water makes the general body of water to be referred to as waters, not water. “And the Spirit of the Lord was hovering over the waters.”^[27]



PICTORAL REPRESENTATION OF WATER LAYER

The waters arranged themselves in layers from the base to the top. Some waters were satisfied with being at the lower strata while others took the pain and stress of occupying the upper strata. In view of this, the entire body of water had to be referred to as waters. They had the same composition but their line of thought did not agree. Some were complacent and inferior thinkers while others were great possibility thinkers.

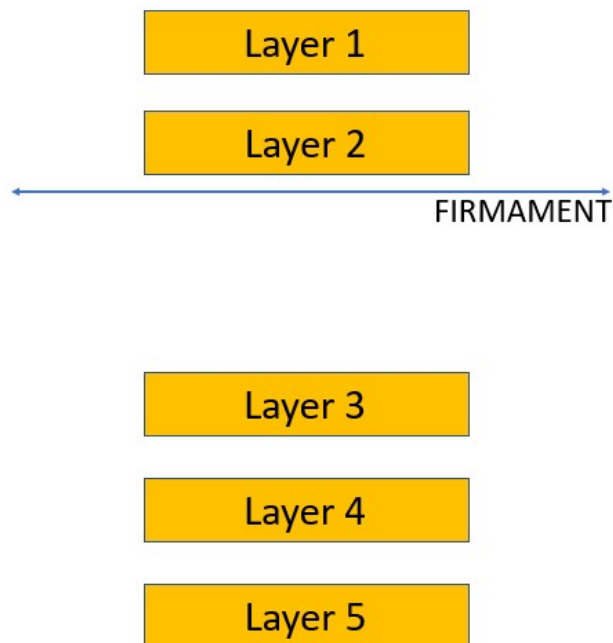
Among the complacent there were still levels. Some were averagely complacent. Some were completely redundant, without any significant ambition, with no intention of aspiring to greater heights. An example is the layer of water that occupied the floor on which other layers were oriented. Likewise, among the possibility

thinkers there were levels. There was a distinct difference between the thought patterns of the water that occupied the topmost layer and that of the one found at four layers below it.

A UNIQUE SEPARATION

After God created the light, the first step he took was to create an expanse between the waters. "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament.'" [\[28\]](#)

The description of a firmament on the waters is better explained this way: Consider a situation in which a table knife was positioned in the middle of a loaf of sliced bread stacked upright. There would be some slices below it while some will be above it. The slices above it are now lifted up, away from the ones below, with the knife being the carriage. The result is that the knife with the slices of bread above is now left at that elevated position.



THE ARROW REPRESENTS THE FIRMAMENT WITH WHICH GOD SEPARATED THE LAYERS OF WATER

God used the firmament to separate the great thinkers and planners from the complacent (the satisfied and comfortable). Having separated them by expanse (firmament), He moved the greater planners far above and bound them permanently in the elevated position with the layers of water which are supported by the blue sky we see today.

GREAT PLANNERS HAVE NO LIMIT

In the beginning, the body of waters occupied the entire surface of the earth. The layers of waters that are bounded above still occupy their usual surface areas as they were from the beginning. As the beginning and the end of the sky cannot be defined, the layers also occupy an infinite space. Everywhere you go in the world you see the sky and also the layers of waters it encloses. The layers of waters above enjoy this limitless territory because of the unconstrained and unbounded mind-set they had in the beginning. They envisaged being at the top and now they are there. It did not happen to them by fluke; they planned for it, aimed at it and with the help of God they got the height far above their imagination. [\[29\]](#)

THE CONSCRIPTION OF THE COMPLACENT

The lower layers of the body of water unfortunately missed the lifting-up by the firmament. As such they were left in their low complacent state, and after the creation of an expanse they also filled the surface of the earth. Later, as the process of creation continued, God discovered that there was a need for dry land and vegetation. Then He instructed the complacent i.e. the satisfied (and unambitious) waters of the lower layers to give way: "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear. And it was so" [\[30\]](#) He defined a boundary for them which today are referred to as the seas. "I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an

everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it.”^[31]

The rolling and roaring of waves in the seas is an expression of dissatisfaction for the constrained territory they occupy. They wish they could occupy the whole earth as it was in the beginning, but it is already too late to do so. That is the repercussion of living a complacent life, dreaming small, and making insignificant plans. A person who fails to plan will end up living a constrained life.

✓ **Wisdom speaks**

Dream big. Preferring sleep to work is a welcome call to poverty. Saying to food you are so delicious is as dangerous as a whirl wind in harvest season. Finding solace in playfulness is a signal to impending danger. He who makes his tent little shall find it extremely difficult coping with many children. And a coward shall ever be a slave.

Enlarge your coast, O coward! Cease from food, O glutton! Dream big and work hard, O sluggard: then shall your poverty end like the shadow of night and your morning come like the glory of a noon.

GOD, THE RESPECTER OF NO MAN

The whole world is anchored on principles and without exception, academic excellence is also founded on principles. It is unfortunate that most of the time prayer and impartation are hammered upon as the tools for success while little or no emphasis is laid on principle. No wonder the result is poor. “So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.”^[32] is a portion of the Scripture that has been used to mislead many people. It has been wrongly interpreted, wrongly applied and people have been tailored by this wrong application of Scripture towards living a wrong, complacent, unfulfilled, unambitious, disgusting and indolent life. They say, “Since it is of God that shows mercy, there is therefore no need to strive.” Some say it verbally while some say it through their attitude.

Academic excellence is achieved more by hard work than by impartation; this is not to say that impartation is unnecessary as it has its own place in the scheme of things if properly applied. The fact of the matter is that hard work, which is a form of *prayer*, is more important in the attainment of excellence than a thousand impartations put together without hard work. Many people run from pillar to post seeking after impartation for excellence while neglecting the core which is unwavering and non-deceptive study; and this is one the reasons for poor performance. Put simply, it takes hard work (studying) to show oneself approved for excellence. ^[33]

We cannot excel unless we apply workable principles. If any freethinker determines to aim higher and they zealously works in line, they can lead their class and be above the Spirit-filled, tongue-speaking, demon-chasing Christians in the class. The firmament favors anyone who is sincerely, diligently and zealously determined to occupy the top layer, and it does this irrespective of the receiver's religious persuasions. The fact that the grace of God is available to Christians is not an indication for them to sit down and expect magic or an irrational miracle to take place. Rather, it is to strengthen them to work harder and to achieve outstanding academic performance.

^[34] Although God is a miracle worker, he is not a magician!

THE PRAYERS OF THE COMPLACENT

"If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable."^[35] The prayers of the lazy, complacent and indolent are hindered from answer by their attitude. They pray for outstanding success but they never make it. Why? Because they have ignored the law of seed sowing which precedes harvest, it is a universal law which can never cease.^[36] God has set out principles and precepts that must be fully obeyed before success can emerge.

^[37] It takes working in harmony with these principles for one to become an invincible academic reference.

CHAPTER 8: SELF CONDEMNATION

The inner man is like a battlefield where two parties are constantly in a wrestling tournament and each of the two parties, (self-assurance and self-condemnation), has the inherent tendency to win. The party who wins gives an indication of the inner state of (the) person. This equally determines their emotion, perception, feeling, decisions, reasoning and above all, their actions.

From my few years of experience in helping people excelling academically, I have discovered that self-condemnation is one of the challenges many students face. It hinders them from making plans by reminding them of plans they have made in the past that did not work out. This makes planning extremely difficult, though they have seen the possibility. The thoughts of insufficiency and incapability hold them bound, disrupt their mental faculties and render their abilities to excel redundant.

Past poor performances, negative names they have unconsciously earned in the past, unpleasant situations and circumstances they have passed through or are passing through, do militate against their desires to make glorious plans. Such negative memories are always displeasing and destabilizing; they also alter the lives of everyone they govern by paralyzing self-confidence and unlocking the gates of fear. They open the road that leads to doubt and poor assimilation which sometimes degenerate to self-pity and weeping in

secret places. Apart from this, such negative memories usher in uncontrollable tension that incapacitates a student from mustering their strength for better performance. The result is indeed chaotic and undesirable.

OVERCOMING SELF CONDEMNATION

The Scriptures says, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation [either self-condemnation or condemnation from other sources] for those who are in Christ Jesus.”^[38] The only challenge without a solution is the one that has never surfaced. That means there is no unpleasant situation without a remedy—every challenge has an antidote. Ignorance might however hinder us from harnessing the resources (that are readily available to us) to solve the challenges we might face, especially when we attach so much importance to such challenges as if no one had ever gone through such before. Of course, this is not true.^[39]

The following steps if honestly and diligently followed would help in overcoming this enemy called self-condemnation.

1. TALK IT OUT

Many students, who subject themselves to self-condemnation, do not see it as a self-imposed situation to which several other students are also susceptible; rather, they see self-condemnation as something strange happening to them alone. But in the actual sense of it, it is common to all. Everyone, at one time or the other, consciously or unconsciously, has experienced self-condemnation.

One can get over self-condemnation by talking things out. A burden shared is a burden lightened; telling a friend that you are finding it difficult to forgive yourself for the past poor performances or mistakes of the past would go a long way in lifting the burden off your mind. I do this a lot and it has helped me a lot; I’ve found that each time I do this, the burden becomes lightened and insignificant.

2. PONDER ON THE THINGS YOU HAVE DONE WELL

It is pathetic that we reflect more on our flaws than on our successes. The totality of your flaws is probably less than thirty percent of all the things you have ever done. That means the good things you have done make up for the remaining over seventy percent. Isn't that amazing! You can never appreciate the great things God has helped you to do or achieve until you take time to reflect upon and meditate on them. In his hymn, *Count Your Blessings*, Johnson Oatman^[40] advised:

*When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

Count your blessings, not your failures—meditate upon the successes you have achieved, the good results you have had, God's favor you have experienced, great and unimaginable things you have harnessed and the unexpected heights you have attained. These will automatically suppress the tendency to indulge in self-condemnation.

3. BUILD UP SELF ASSURANCE

Self-assurance and self-condemnation are the two parties identified at the beginning of this chapter as being constantly at war in every individual. Yet, despite the tendency to indulge in self-condemnation, every man has the latent power to build up his self-assurance. Positive confessions like, "I can make it," "I will excel," "I can do it with God on my side," "I am configured to be the best," "I am a success," "I am a glory going somewhere to blaze forth," "It is well with me," "Self-condemnation is not my portion" go a long way in building up self-assurance. Every time you utter such words, self-

condemnation gradually disappears from your life; its strength is weakened because self-assurance is always on the winning side.

4. SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

In the situation whereby the root of self-condemnation is deep such as physical and/or sexual abuse, complicated psychological issues, depression, and other such related issues, it is wise to seek the help of experts. Because they are well-versed in these areas, they are in a better position to offer professional advice and may administer whatever therapy is appropriate for each situation as the need may be.

Experienced, trusted, matured and genuine ministers of God who are matured in the faith have also had a lot of experience in this area; consulting with such minister of God could also go a long way in solving the problem.

5. TELL IT TO GOD

Our heavenly Father understands how we feel always. However, He wants us to approach Him with an open and sincere heart. He is always ready to listen to us and help us. He created all things and has an unquantifiable power over them. Talk to him on how self-condemned you feel. Ask Him to help you and He would for He always listens to our cry for help^[41]. Therefore beloved, get rid of self-condemnation very quickly. A self-condemned student cannot have an exceptional academic performance.

✓ Wisdom speaks

Your past may be as bad as the devil, yet your tears can't change it. Your tears may be as much as the oceans, yet they can't wipe out a letter. That your past is bad and unchangeable does not mean your future would be the same. God gave everyone a tomorrow so that they could

improve on the past. Why would you waste today by dwelling on the past? Why would you waste tomorrow by dwelling on the guilt of today? Invest positively in today and leave behind your past, with its evils and regrets. With a positive attitude, you can rewrite your history on a golden slate. God never remembers your past. Daily, He has a fresh image of you. Let the past go, and create for yourself a glorious tomorrow by positively investing in today.

CHAPTER 9: THE SECRET OF PLANNING

From The *Longman Active Study Dictionary (Eighth Impression)*, “to plan” means “to think about something you are going to make, and decide what it will be like.” Have you ever had this experience: you pass through a full day and at night you could not point out a concrete thing you achieved in that day? The day came and went just like that. Occurrences like this should be avoided by every student. God has planned the number of years that everyone of us will spend on earth. We would be unfair to ourselves if we do not plan how we would spend it. One of the greatest assets a man has is the innate ability to plan. This is the essence of time management.

THE POWER BEHIND PLANNING

Proper planning (or time management) helps you know where you are to be at any given time and what you should be doing at such times. It is a strong force in the success mix and helps to fuel our desire to become exceptional. Planning helps break complex and ambiguous dreams into simple and achievable ones by which it propels us to move forward. It helps us have a clear definition of ambitions and intentions and enables us to maximize the use of our time. It gives such a clear roadmap to excellence that someone who applies this principle will never major on the minors; neither will they minor on the majors.

HOW TO ACHIEVE A BETTER PERFORMANCE

1. SET A REASONABLE GOAL

At the beginning of any session (or term depending on your school system),

- Have a watchword or motto that you will work with for that session.
- Write out a list of the courses you are offering for that session.
- Put against each course the score you desire to make.
- Make sure that you put down great scores based on the principles we have discussed earlier in this book and since you have visualized and can actually see a better performance.
- Compute your results for that session based on the scores you have allotted for each course or subject.
- If the computed result is not better than the previous one, then, the goal you have set is not a great one. So, start all over again. A reasonable goal is a goal that is increase-oriented.
- Adjust the result to reflect a visible and significant increase.
- For those writing professional exams, a target of having a minimum pass mark or *narrowly escaping the border line* does not showcase wisdom. Set a target that will stretch you by demanding your full concentration in order to achieve it.
- Write out the steps you will take to ensure that you achieve what you have written.
- Paste the result on a conspicuous place where everybody, including you can easily see it.

EXAMPLE OF A WRITTEN GOAL

MY ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE 2020/2021 SESSION

Motto: *I am stepping out like I mean business*^[42]

COURSE	GRADE
Fluid Mechanics	A
Thermodynamics	A+
Machine Design	A
Global Manufacturing	A
Material Science	A+
Engineering Mechanics	A
Engineering Law	A

Now ask yourself this question: how will I achieve this goal?

- I will read each of my courses for three hours in a week
- I will ask questions from friends and tutors when I do not understand a topic
- I will solve as many past questions as possible
- I will pray fervently to God for help, strength and favor

✓ **Wisdom speaks**

- ***Take time to spell out your vision.***
- ***Write it out clearly on your mind and on paper; a vision worth not writing is worth not pursuing.***
- ***Take time to plan.***
- ***Take time to pray.***

2. PLAN YOUR TIME

Having planned your results, you must also plan your time. Make a reasonable and workable timetable covering all the courses or subjects you are offering and clearly spell out the time you will be spending on each of them in a week. For instance, if you will have lectures between 8a.m-3p.m, it will be unreasonable to indicate on

your timetable that you will start reading from 3p.m till 11p.m. Allowance should be given for refreshment and relaxation before reading commences or in-between the time stipulated for reading..

Paste the timetable in a conspicuous place where it would be easily seen. Make your timetable a priority that you would be keen to follow and be faithful to it.

3. CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS

Being friends with everyone is not an indication of affection; rather it is an indication of folly. A student who wants to become an invincible academic reference does not become friend with those who do not care about what happens to their academics; never make them your intimate friends. And don't deceive yourself that you can change them by socializing with them; it is only God that can change people so leave that to Him.

So, who should your friends be?

- Make friends with people of like mind.
- Make friends also with those who are of a higher academic standing than you.

You might find this a bit challenging, but making this effort helps in making you an invincible academic reference. In my second year as an undergraduate, I was able, through the result of the first year exams, to identify those who were of good academic standing. The results of some of them were far better than mine while some were in the same range as mine. I consciously made friends with some of those whose results were far better than mine. Whenever I found it difficult to understand what the lecturer taught I would go to them for explanations. When confronted with any tough assignment, I interacted with such students and together we found solutions to them. This helped me tremendously throughout my years as an undergraduate student and contributed significantly to my success. I give all the glory to God.

- Have a reading colleague. Make yourself responsible to someone who is godly, who can teach you, advise you, encourage you and be a source of motivation to you. “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”^[43]

4. LEARN TO SAY NO

In the academic community, there are a lot of activities jostling for students’ attention. They appear educative, informative and edifying; coming in attractive packages, they claim to be able to build people up. Truly some of them fulfill their promises by making us well-rounded students, yet others are just a waste of precious time. The wise student would not say yes to all of them—you are not expected to be found in all the seminars and conferences. For you to achieve an academic excellence, learn to say no to some invitations and always remember that every activity participated in, every occasion attended, every football tournament watched, and every pre-event and post-event argument on a football match watched draws on a significant portion of your time. Be wise!

Finally, avoid excessive gist and unnecessary arguments. Wisely turn down unimportant visits. Be wise in accepting or running for political offices; rather find a way of functioning effectively in either religious or academic bodies. Do not get yourself unnecessarily busy at the expense of your primary assignment which is your academics pursuit. Those who do that regret it sometimes after leaving school. “The prudent give thought to their steps.”^[44]

✓ Wisdom speaks

Time is as precious as life, and it is irreversible once it is gone. The person who does not respect your time will not respect your life; from such turn away.

SECTION 3: STRIKE THE POSSIBILITY



CHAPTER 10: THE BORDER OF GOLD

Husterfung^[45] had been in hostility with Linkaj for over sixty years concerning Jafan. Jafan was a forty-hectare expanse of land that lay between them and which was very rich in gold deposits, worth several trillions of dollars. From the segregations on the map, the ownership of the land is not clearly defined. Every attempt made by reconciliatory teams from various quarters had proven abortive. The advice to let go of the land made by influential people in both countries fell on deaf ears.

As the enmity became intensified, the Jafanians discovered that they could no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. Religious Leaders of high repute did their best, but all their efforts proved futile. The only way out as far as the parties were concerned, was an all-out war, the winner of which would take possession of the land.

Linkaj had about two million soldiers trained to fight on land. They could handle, to very high precision, all manner of weapons—guns, bombs as well as arrows and slings. Indeed, they were as swift as the eagle.

Husterfung's army, which was internationally trained, consisted of three million military men trained for physical combat, and could handle (with great precision) special weapons such as guns, bombs, other explosives and missile. This made her war technology far higher than Linkaj's. The Husterfung government also spent a lot to train twenty thousand of her military personnel on how to operate war planes. Her arsenal was situated in Convio and her war planes in Setneria.

YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES

With the battle line drawn the date of commencement of war was determined. Linkaj, aware of the military prowess of Husterfung ensured that it left no stone unturned in its preparation for this war—the training was intense, with the army mustering all it could in terms of strength and technique. It was like a fight against the whole universe. The soldiers also encouraged one another by greeting themselves in this manner: “No retreat!” and the response would be: “No surrender!”

The Commander-in-chief of Linkaj’s army encouraged the soldiers with the following words: “Husterfung is a battle already won.” The soldiers imbibed this and there was an air of enthusiasm within the camp, the source of which no one could fathom. The trick, however, was that despite the fact that they saw the possibility of winning they did not rest on their oars, but backed it up by mapping out strategies to attack the enemy from both the front and the rear—a tactic that was sure to give them victory.

OVERCONFIDENCE IN ACTION

Husterfung’s Chief of the Army staff gathered the entire army together and told them how weak and insignificant the Linkaj army was. He described the opponent as mosquitoes waging war against lions. He despised them. “We do not need to prepare as such to attack the ill-fated nation,” he said, “Everybody could go and make himself comfortable in the barracks.....we are moving to the battle front a day to the commencement of the battle....we have the technology more sophisticated and more powerful than theirs.....a discharge from one of our war planes is enough to wipe off their entire army....we do not need to expend any extra energy to fight the ill-fated army.” He foolishly displayed overconfidence in battle.

GREAT PLANNERS STRIKE

On day the day of battle, Linkaj’s first target was Convio and Setneria which they successfully set on fire. With their arsenal and war planes destroyed, Husterfung’s army lost coordination. This was the loophole Linkaj maximally used against the enemy. The

inadequate preparation of Husterfung claimed the lives of over one million soldiers on the first two days of fighting. Unfortunately, their attempt to re-strategize was frustrated by Linkaj's attack from the rear which claimed Husterfung's major barracks; also, Husterfung's reserved cantonment was destroyed. Over two and a half million soldiers of Husterfung went with the war which lasted three weeks.

When the government of Husterfung discovered that the enemies had gained full access to the Federal Capital Territory with a lot of the citizens becoming victims, the head of the government called for a resolution of the crisis and ceded Jafan to Linkaj forever.

MORALE OF THE STORY

1. OVERCONFIDENCE DESTROYS

Husterfung was in a better position to win the battle. The country had some leverage over the opponent in terms of experienced military personnel, sophisticated military technology, high technical-know-how and internationally trained air force. Despite this though, the army did not properly appropriate this advantage, rather it frittered away the opportunities through over-confidence. They saw the possibility, but from the faulty point of view of their Chief of the Army Staff. They ineffectively planned how to actualize the possibility and, in the end, failed woefully.

This is true of many students. They erroneously assume that some of their courses are very simple. As a result, while some pay less attention to such subjects, others take it to the ridiculous extent of not attending lectures. The result is that lecture materials keep accumulating and they are unable to cope with the enormity of the materials and in the end they perform poorly. Why? Such students wait until when exams are around the corner before applying the fire brigade approach; of course, like the Husterfungs, students in this category fail woefully.

2. PUT YOUR ALL INTO IT

Linkaj however, maximized all they had. Despite not being as sophisticated as the Husterfungs, they did not allow the fact that the opponent was about six times powerful than they were, to blind them to the possibilities available to them. They planned the possibility by visualizing themselves as an underdog nation pitted against the whole world. They knew that if they did not strategize properly, they would remain the underdog and get wiped off the face of the earth. They knew they had to survive. What they did was to strike the possibility available to them, by making use of the enemies' loopholes and fighting with everything they had. They won the battle.

Few people see you when you are (seeing and) planning for academic excellence. The majority only see you when you strike the possibility. Like Linkaj, you also can surmount every academic challenge in your way. You can perform exceptionally if you put your all into it.

✓ **Wisdom speaks**

Your five loaves of bread can feed the hungry five thousand if you will only believe and let it go. Believe in the little that you are (or have). Believe in the vastness of wealth embedded in your little. The evidence of your faith is in what you do with your little. Trust in God to breathe on your smallness. And you will be surprised at what your little bread would do as you put it to use. Remember, no one is born great. All great people are people of humble beginning. Remember also that overconfidence kills. Do not despise the day of little beginning. [\[46\]](#)

CHAPTER 11: ARISE!

“God steps out like he means business. You can see he’s primed for action. He shouts, announcing his arrival; he takes charge and his enemies fall into long.”^[47] During the early stage in the faith, God was presented to us as a Being who does things in magical ways. We went away with the impression that God was the One who sat in the Heavens and thought things to manifestation. Consequently, some of us have this erroneous belief: **Think great, do little and achieve great.** Our Lord Jesus Christ observed that the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.^[48]

THE HARDWORKING GOD

Whenever God wants to achieve a feat, perform wonders, or display some awesome deeds, he gets himself on track: **The Lord steps out like He means business.**

Although He is the All-powerful (Omnipotent), who could at the wave of a hand, accomplish all He wanted, yet this Omnipotent God is always up and about when he is set to perform exceptional tasks. He comes out of Himself so to speak and musters His strength and zeal to accomplish the task on which He has set His mind. No wonder he has never failed. That is why it is only those who understand salient truths as this about Him that will do great exploits.^[49]

SEEING AND PLANNING ARE NOT ENOUGH

Seeing and planning the possibility are not the only things you need to become an invincible academic reference, you must equally step out with confidence like someone who really means business.

Your exceptional and deliberate enthusiasm must be seen. Visions and dreams that do not change your character are mere illusions. Therefore, it must be evident both consciously and unconsciously that you are up for something.

Success is first seen in behavior before it is eventually manifested.

Your intention must be evident in the way you read and your seriousness must be plain to all. Saying that you do not want people to call you “a book worm” is not humility. It is just a display of a higher level of ignorance. On no account should you be absent in classes except for circumstances beyond control. Telling people that you are going to read is not pride. It is just the demonstration of a form of seriousness and zealousness. It is hardly possible for someone who starts reading a week to exams to have outstanding academic performance. I have not seen one.

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF WHEN READING

Find out the number of hours you could assimilate while reading and stop when you have reached the point of saturation. When you reach your limit close your book and get some exercise. You could watch a movie, discuss with friends, take a walk, spend time with God, or do the domestic chores you couldn't do while reading. Your mode of relaxation depends on your priorities. You will not impress anybody but yourself by saying, “I read non-stop for twelve hours,” when only a third of that time was productive. It is the exceptional performance that your reading produces that people honor; therefore, for you to effectively read for an exceptional performance, break your reading duration into reasonable fragments such that you will have time to read, refresh and later go back to read.

NEVER SUFFER IN SILENCE

Some students find it difficult to open up to others when they have difficulty understanding what they are being taught. They believe that if they own up, others will look down on them. What

they fail to understand is that **we are students because we are studying and as students, we all have the quest to acquire knowledge**. Someone may have the ability to easily grasp what is being taught before others, that doesn't mean he was not as ignorant as others before being taught; asking such a person for help should therefore not be a big deal.

To the glory of God, I happened to be the best in my class during undergrad, but I did not deceive myself that I had a monopoly of knowledge; neither did I suffer in silence by refusing to ask questions in class whenever I did not understand what was being taught. Apart from this, I seek the help of my classmates whenever any course appears very tough. You should not be too proud to ask for help when there is someone around who could easily help out. Humble yourself before those who know and let them instruct you. Be wise!

NEVER MAKE ANY NEGATIVE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT A COURSE

We are sometimes tempted to write off any course or subject with which we have some difficulty. In my third year during undergrad in the Department of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering (Wood Products Engineering option), Assembly Drawing gave me a real tough time as it appeared abstract to me and the lecturer did not help issues at all. I was so wound up about it that I almost said, 'If I fail, I fail'. However, I got the understanding from the scriptures that there is no test, challenge or circumstance that comes our way that God doesn't give us the ability to subdue. "We all experience times of testing, which is normal for every human being. But God will be faithful to you. He will screen and filter the severity, nature, and timing of every test or trial you face so that you can bear it. And each test is an opportunity to trust him more, for along with every trial God has provided for you a way of escape that will bring you out of it victoriously."^[50]

With this understanding I mustered all the strength and capability in me in order to subdue this challenge. I asked my colleagues who

understood the course to help and I talked to God about it. When I wrote the exams the results were good. If you do not write off a course, but remain undaunted and tenacious seeking the help of God and people, then you will excel in your endeavor regardless of how tough it appears. Rather than running away from such situations, you should rather see it as a challenge aimed at building you up.

ACCEPT YOUR TUTORS THE WAY THEY ARE

If identical twins could have behavioral differences, then one should expect behavioral differences among people with different cultural, religious and educational backgrounds. If we apply this fact to tutors, then we might understand why some behave the way they do. Some may appear caring making themselves available as would a parent, friend or senior colleague while others may appear harsh and mean coming across as being extremely unfriendly.

Accept your lecturers irrespective of their disposition. On no account should you hate your tutor as that prepares the ground for poor performance—if you dislike someone, you will consciously or unconsciously dislike what they offer. Disliking your tutor is at your detriment. Be wise!

CHAPTER 12: THE STRENGTH UNNOTICED

When you feel like you have been fully spent, there is yet (unknown to you) a latent tenacity in you. This aura, which is deep down within you, is an intangible streamlet that flows when all the mega streams of capacity are exhausted. It may appear insignificant, but it is very powerful. It is the invincible source that drives you from within—if you feel exhausted, it is this divine deposit that keeps you going to emerge an invincible academic reference.

David made use of it after he had returned from a battle only to find that the entire nation had been taken captive. He wept until he was fully spent and then he drew upon the strength unnoticed, to pursue, overtake and recover all that was plundered. It could not have been his usual strength since that strength had been fully spent.^[51] The existence of this strength unnoticed, whose potency is far greater than the normal strength, is known by very few people who harness it to their advantage. I call this strength *the strength unnoticed* because it is quite different from the normal strength of a person. On the strength profile it is found at the base and because it is quite infinitesimal this strength unnoticed is usually ignored.

THE STRENGTH UNNOTICED IN ACTION

“Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty warriors, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Then the Israelites retreated, but Eleazar stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The Lord

brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.”^[52]

That was another true-life incident where strength unnoticed was displayed. The entire army of Israel fought until their strength was fully spent. Then they retreated. The Philistines were however intact and very effective. But one man called Eleazar was aware of the existence of strength unnoticed and its unfathomable use. He also had already spent his noticeable strength.

With this intangible and highly powerful strength he single-handedly fought the entire army of a nation, both the strong and giant, the most experienced and skillful, the Anakite and others in the army and won. Note that this is not fiction. It is a real-life occurrence in the book of history. Eleazar made use of the exceptional strength unnoticed and he became invincible to the Philistines. Because of this exceptional display of strength, his name was written as a legend among the mighty men of David.

STRENGTH UNNOTICED: FATHER OF THE EXTRAORDINARY

The strength unnoticed which gives birth to a trait called extraordinary is present in everyone; yet it is known by only a few, utilized by only a few. The few who make use of it do the extraordinary. With it they go the extra mile. They use it to explore a course further when others fall on the wayside after making negative conclusions about the course. With the strength unnoticed, they do what others dare not do and with it, they launch into the realm of invincibility against every rising issue of life. They read extensively and acquire more knowledge and end up performing exceptionally in their academics.

DO THE EXTRAORDINARY

With the grace of God as a constant factor for all, the extra is what brings about uniqueness in the performance of a student; it is the secret the best student in your class has been applying while reading and during examinations. It positions them far higher than

their contemporaries and catapults a studious student from the ordinary to one who stands tall and is distinct.

You too can become exceptional when you make up your mind not to be complacent but to go the extra mile. If you are determined to do this, you can lead your class. Doing the extras is one of the secrets of becoming an invincible reference.

IT WORKS

Fluid mechanics 1 was a course before which some students “trembled” in the second-year undergrad in my faculty—Faculty of Technology. Many students were discouraged because it was believed that no one could ever get a distinction in the course. With this information and knowledge about the course, I made up my mind right from the onset that I was going to break the jinx. I read the lecture notes from cover to cover as many times as I could, I solved as many past questions that I could find, and I did the practical and the assignments. After these I moved on to read textbooks to gather more knowledge concerning the course.

On the day of examination, I was so meticulous that I didn’t make any mistakes and I solved all the questions I could with precision. When the results came out, only two people, one other student and I had distinction in that course throughout the whole faculty. As usual the result was not good generally. But we made distinctions because of the grace of God and the extraordinary effort that we put in.

With the grace God has given you, work more than them all and you will achieve more than them all.

CHAPTER 13: AN ENEMY CALLED DISCOURAGEMENT

It is a truth, believed by few people but ignored by a lot that some enemies come in form of friends. The intention they express and their disposition portray friendship, but deep within, they are wolves in sheep's clothing. Unaware of their missions the gullible easily embrace them. But in the long run, such people pay for their gullibility dearly. One of these enemies disguised as friends, is discouragement.

When this enemy comes visiting, there will always be cogent reasons why it must be entertained because it comes around when all hope seems to be lost; an example of such susceptible moments is when much is put into academic pursuit and nothing substantial comes out of it. It is at this time, (when purpose seems to have been thwarted and challenges seem to be overwhelming) that this enemy stretches forth affectionate arms.

It comes gorgeously dressed, at a time when a friend is needed to strengthen and to help; but rather than help, they worsen the situation, ushering in depression, making the hand grow feeble and the knees giving way. It paralyses the activities of the mind while within seconds; it turns a warrior into a weakling. The result is that it repositions students from the path of success to that of failure sapping the enthusiasm and eagerness within.

The invincible tenacity excuses one on the arrival of discouragement. It cuts off the flow of life in one and orchestrates difficulties and prolonged tension. It brings about confusion of mind and of the spirit and stirs within one, doubts of the existence of the

great God and His supremacy. Discouragement so swamps one that one believe one is all alone and lonely. It destroys ambitions, kills great visions and causes potential celebrities to dwell in the assembly of common people.

✓ **Wisdom speaks**

If you set your heart on doing the exceptional, prepare to meet a crew of discouragement but you can choose not to welcome nor entertain them. David was not excluded from the list of those who had at one time or the other encountered this deadly crew; the day he fought Goliath was a memorable day. His brother discouraged him.

WATCH OUT FOR CLOSE RELATIONS

The first phase of discouragement emanated from David's blood brothers. They could not do what he was going to do. Consequently, out of envy, they did not want him to do it either. Many people have suffered discouragement from friends, relatives and siblings who do it unconsciously, believing that they were offering helping hands, or were showing care and concern. However, we should not rule out the fact that some do it consciously, sometimes out of envy or other ulterior motives. Regardless of the intention, never allow what they say or do to discourage you. Let's look at what David's brother said when he was on his way to exterminate the giant, Goliath. The Bible said one of his brothers burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here...I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is...."^[53]

What does wickedness of heart have to do with rescuing a nation from the oppression of the mighty? That is indeed a contradiction. That is the extent people could go to hinder one from excelling if one were not wise. His brother's intention might be plain and devoid of envy. Nonetheless, it was discouraging utterance in disguise.

WATCH OUT FOR AUTHORITIES

The second phase of discouragement emanated from the leader of the army, King Saul. If one is not wise, people in authority can manipulate one's life, and hinder one from excelling. This is sometimes true of academic communities, and if one is not careful, authorities can contribute wittingly or unwittingly towards the poor performance of students. Statements^[54] like, "No one has ever made distinction in this course," "The highest so far was 50," "At least, forty percent of students usually fail this course," "It's not possible to make distinction in this Department," go a long way in discouraging students.

A wise student would ignore such comments and would never allow that to disturb him or her. Tell yourself that no one has ever finished with a first class (or distinction) because someone like you had never been there to break the jinx. See yourself as a jinx breaker—someone who sets precedence and do not allow yourself to be moved!

King Saul, the figure of authority here, said: "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth."^[55] David went all the same and won. People sometimes view their fellow men through the mirror of their own mind. They see people in their own image rather than in the image of God. That is the reason you should not be moved by peoples' comments about you. What God, the Ultimate says about you should be the ultimate, nothing else.

WATCH OUT FOR THE SUBJECT MATTER

The main adversary also uttered discouraging words as would all enemies. Goliath looking David over and seeing that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome despised him and said to him, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods."^[56] To be despised remains one of the worst forms of discouragement a person could experience from someone else. It makes one more aware of one's vulnerability. A feeling of being despised, if it is given attention, relocates a student to the company of the incapable and can make a mighty person, who

hitherto was prepared and ready for war, to lose heart and retreat. Fortunately, God does not despise people.^[57] He also instructs us not to allow anybody to despise us.^[58]

Sometimes in academics, we are confronted with seemingly insurmountable challenges which declare us incapable and unveil our weaknesses. Such challenges could come in form of courses that tend to raise their standards above our capabilities and intellect to the extent that if we do not muster our in-built strength and invincibility, we might give in.

✓ **Wisdom speaks**

Anyone who does not appreciate who you are and what strengths you have, but continuously focuses on your weakness is the enemy to your vision. Run from such.

WATCH OUT FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND

Circumstances surrounding us might not always be encouraging. When we are faced with examinations that are overwhelming, tests whose results are discouraging but the surrounding circumstances radiate hope and confidence, the burden is lightened. However, this is not always the case. Discouragement often comes in packages containing many items.

Life challenges would always surface. For example, financial constraint was one of the challenges I faced during undergrad. Many times, I found it extremely difficult to get the necessary materials for the courses I offered. What I did was to borrow such materials from friends and quickly use them while the owners were not using them. People say that it is impossible to read and assimilate without food. I have been without food times without number to the extent that reading without food became a normal routine with me. The financial situation at home was such that it would be insensitive on my part to call home or mount pressure for food or money. And as should be expected with my limited financial means, I had difficulties paying my school fees. Yet, despite all this, some people, out of

envy (that despite the hard times I faced, I was still making headway in my academic pursuit) sometimes uttered heart-rending words. But I told myself, "Samuel, you have no excuse to finish as the second best."

SAY NO TO DISCOURAGEMENT

Regardless of how insurmountable challenges of life might look, we all have the power in us to say NO. Academic challenges might appear overwhelming, but the decision not to give in is the gift the Creator has configured us with. David said NO, and he defeated Goliath. I said NO, and God granted me a reasonable position among the best in my Faculty and the best in my Department.

A colleague in Physics Department said NO and he moved from Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 4.5, (Second Class, Lower Division) after the first year to finish with 6.0, a First Class grade in his final year. A female colleague in the Department of Chemistry said NO and she moved from CGPA of 4.4, Second Class (Lower Division) to finish with 6.0, a First Class in her final year. Barrack Obama said NO and he ended up as the first American of African descent to occupy the White House. Abraham Lincoln said NO and he ended up fulfilling a mandate. Great men like Bill Gates, Ben Carson, and Theodore Roosevelt said NO and they became exceptional. A friend who failed Medical Examination (MB; BS Part 1) said NO and she made it at the second attempt.

It takes saying NO to discouragement to become an invincible academic reference. The challenges you are facing right now are common to everybody. So, boldly and confidently say, "NO."

✓ Wisdom speaks

One-time failure does not mean you are a born failure; even when you've failed seven times seven, you are not.^[59] Failure, (no matter how many) only confirms that you are human^[60] and not God; and that you still have things not yet to learn. Therefore, when you fail don't feel get discouraged and don't give up; rather rise and seek more knowledge.

CHAPTER 14: MAXIMIZE HIS GRACE

The Scripture says, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.”^[61] There is leverage available to us as Christians. It is intentionally given by God to make a clear-cut distinction between His people and others. This leverage is called **grace**. Apostle Paul, being aware of how crucial grace was, prayed for the saints: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...be with you all.”^[62] This grace enables us to work more; also, it blesses the works of our hands. If not for grace in action, the ratio of our labor to result would be one to one. Despite its promises though, the results of a student might not reflect the existence of grace if this leverage is not fully utilized. Some students struggle in academic pursuit because they are not appropriating the fundamental privileges of grace.

A FRIEND SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE (HE DID NOT MAXIMIZE THE GRACE OF GOD AVAILABLE TO HIM)

I am Strikh BeWise^[63], a final year student on Second Class (Upper Division) in the Department of Chemistry of a University in Africa. To God’s glory I was also the Vice President of a campus Christian fellowship. When God lays it upon your heart to be outstanding it might not be for now, but for the future. He made sufficient grace available to me in academic endeavor. If I had maximized it, I would have graduated with a first class with ease. I have had various outstanding results like ninety-six percent in

exams. Results as such could have been predominant if I had contributed my all and fully used His grace.

In my second year, another student and I were the only individuals who did not have a drop in result. I rather had academic increase. However, the increase could have been exponential if I had not submitted to peer pressure and relationship exuberance. The inappropriate relationship which eventually broke up took up five hours of my time daily except on Sundays. If I had channeled this expensive time into my academic pursuit and given it my best, I would have had an unusual success. Likewise, if I had known earlier that I would become the Vice President of the campus fellowship I am attending, I would not have ever given in to distractions. In fact, I would not have dreamt of a Second Class result.

As the Vice President there are outstanding deeds I could have done if I have had an outstanding result. There are excellence propelling messages I could have preached and some counsels I could have given people if I have had an exceptional result. I could have rebuked some people bluntly as regards their academic endeavor, declared to congregation that they were meant to be leading their classes, have session results equivalent to first class, if I were also there. In fact, my University might not have “contained” me. I could not do all these as it would be unjust of me to be imposing on people to achieve what I am not handling—the testimony I have not experienced. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at **and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.**”^[64]

BE WISE

Your inability to maximally harness His grace is a mighty weapon in the devil’s hand to stop you from getting to your destined place. How thoroughly you prepare in anticipation for the future determines how well you will perform when you get there. Put in your all and maximally apply His available abundant grace to your academics now. Although you may not make use of your certificate to seek for

employment in future, it might be an instrument with which you would bless life. Be wise!’

“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”^[65]

CHAPTER 15:

EXAMINATION

One can hardly be promoted without passing through an examination which is a bridge that must be crossed by anyone who desires uplifting. Someone said an unexamined life is not worth living. Examination enables us to discover our capability and also helps us to make necessary changes and improvements. It prepares us for the challenges ahead and propels us to harness the inherent ability the Divine has bestowed on us. It is thus an instrument for separating the visionary from the unimaginative.

The number of exams one writes, either in academic pursuit or in the school of life, goes a long way in determining the height one would attain. It is the last gate leading to one's becoming a reference in life. Having seen, planned and worked towards the possibility, the trumpet that blows out your level of preparation, assimilation and understanding is your performance in examinations. The fundamental judgment of how versed a student is, is based on their performance in exams as it dictates the category to which they would belong: good, average or poor. Examinations come and go, but their impact may last a lifetime.

BELIEVING MORE IN SELF THAN IN GOD

It is always examination for those who neglect the place of God because they believe they can become great solely through their own strength. This is also the case for the ungodly who have despised God's gift to mankind by not acknowledging Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They must labor exceptionally and put in all their strength before they could have good success.

The strength they put in is always equivalent to the results they get since they have despised His grace, favor and mercy. This is the state of the immoral and the wayward. Anybody could quote and confess Scriptures; however, God's word profits those whose ways are upright. [\[66\]](#)

"EXAMIFAVOR" TO THE ELECT

It is always "examifavor" for some selected people. These include those who are not Lacking Appreciable Zeal for Yielding (LAZY), who Labor Under Correct Knowledge (LUCK). It also includes those who wisely follow the Scriptural principle of seed time and harvest; as well as those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour, who are working and walking in accordance with His will. Those who prefer to please God rather than people and finally those who have heaven as their ultimate goal.

It is always 'examifavor' for wise, serious and dedicated children of God who live a holy life. A life without Christ is lacking in grace and glory. The timetabled academic exams could be passed without Christ, but you cannot pass the examinations of life that have no timetable without him. He is the Savior of the world. Without him you cannot make heaven. Accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior and you will never regret taking such a decision, both now and in eternity. [\[67\]](#)

WHAT TO DO DURING EXAMINATION SEASON

CUT DOWN ACTIVITIES

It is possible as a student to have a lot of engagements other than academics. This could be personal business, group activities, religious work, and philanthropic activities among others. It is wise to cut down on some of these activities some weeks to your exams and to maximize your time day and night by reducing extra-curricular activities to the barest minimum. Be involved only in one that is very compulsory, if there is any as such. Be wise!

RELATIONSHIP CORNER

Those who are in relationships within the same academic community should demonstrate some level of maturity and discipline. Hours spent visiting each other should be cut down to the barest minimum during exam seasons. It is a biblical fact that one would chase a thousand while two would chase ten thousand. Relationships should be a boost not a threat to academic pursuit. It is however, a sad fact that some 'Twos' are chasing five hundred or nothing instead of chasing ten thousand.

Below are some factors that militate against the academics of those who are not handling relationships wisely.

THE "CANOPY MINISTRY"

Simply put, it is follow-follow ministry. This is the situation whereby two people in a relationship are always found together. One is always seen within the same perimeter as the other person is. How we handle relationships is a measure of our maturity. There should be a breathing space to allow each other to think, to study and to assimilate. Examination period is not the time when two students in a relationship should be found together everywhere and every time, without academic reasons. The *canopy ministry* has jeopardized the academics of many students. Following each other every time and everywhere is essentially not the definition of love. It is an indication of immaturity and ignorance. Do not be held captive by your emotions such that you will no longer know the right from the wrong. Discuss with your partner and plan your meeting time. An unscheduled life is not worth living. Make a reasonable schedule. Be wise!

"JOINT READING VENTURE"

The highest level of deception is when you deceive yourself. There is nothing wrong with reading with one's partner if it is productive. It works for some and not for others. Many people, (though not all), in relationships who read together have either one party or (in some cases) both suffering academic setbacks. Someone who is highly emotional may be very slow assimilating what is being

read while studying with someone to whom he or she is strongly emotionally attached to. Discover yourself and do not suffer in silence. Once *Joint Reading* is not working for any of the party it should be stopped. The fact that your friend reads with her partner does not mean that you also must read with yours. Be wise!

Other factors that might influence a student performance in exams include the following:

SOLVING PAST QUESTIONS

There is nothing new under the sun.^[68] The curriculum for a course might only be renewed, it does not always change—at least, it does not always change dramatically. The implication of this is that, the questions that have been set so far covers the boundary of the curriculum, so also would the questions that would be set in the future. Past questions give one a glimpse of how each exam will look like. It prepares one's mind for what one is likely to face in upcoming exams and allows one to know how simple or difficult a course or subject might be. Studying successive past questions can give a rough evaluation of a tutors' mind with regards to how they set questions—especially if the same tutor has taught the course over a period. It could also give a glimpse of what should be concentrated on and what should not—especially while writing standardized exams.

Some tutors set questions based on the explanations they give in class while others set directly from the note. This is known by going through the past questions and comparing them with the lecture notes. Some lecturers repeat past questions. A student who reads well and faithfully and solves past questions rarely performs poorly in exams. Solve as many past questions as you could but this does not mean that it should be a substitute for zealous and sincere studying.

OBEY INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER

Many students perform poorly in tests and exams, not because they do not read well or assimilate what they read, but because they

do not obey the examiner's instructions to the letter. Examination exuberance and frivolity prevents them from reading, assimilating and adhering to instructions. Examiners do not just test how much you know about their courses; they also test how prudent you are at adhering to simple and hidden instructions.

Consider this question:

List and briefly discuss five items on the Exclusive Legislative List.

The question above contains two parts: (1) you are to list five items on the exclusive legislative list (2) you are to briefly discuss five items on the exclusive legislative list. Marks would be allotted for listing and separate marks, for brief discussion. The marks could be equal. A student carried away by exams triviality might go ahead and start discussing five items on the *exclusive legislative list* without first listing *them*. No matter how much such student writes, if the question carries ten marks, they might end up scoring only five marks (05/10). This is because they have failed to obey the instructions to the detail. Firstly, they are expected to list five items on the exclusive legislative list, after which they should start explaining them one after the other.

Questions that say criticize, outline, argue, compare and contrast, distinguish, itemize, enumerate and calculate should be handled in their distinct manner.

Consider this question:

Criticize Plato's definition of philosophy.

A student who explains Plato's definition of philosophy might end up scoring twenty-five percent. This is because such student has not answered the question correctly. The answer to the question should be founded on critical reasoning, not explanation.

Questions like "What is not a village?" and "What does not make a man?" are sensitive questions which must be carefully handled. The "*not*" silently mentioned, if not carefully handled, might result in

poor performance. Medical and paramedical students should be conscious of the spelling of non-English words and cogent words that must be mentioned while writing tests and exams. Every student should be conscious of the technical words in their field of studies and how to apply them appropriately in exams.

KNOW WHAT YOUR TUTOR WANTS

“The toil of fools wearies them; they do not know the way to town.”^[69] The labor of the fools was futile not because they did not have the strength to go to the town or because they were not willing to go to the town. Their labor was frustrating and frustrated because they were ignorant of the way, the method and strategy essential to get there. That is what makes them foolish. It is essential that a student knows what his tutor wants as answers to questions.

Some tutors are captivated with how much a student write. On the other hand, some tutors are turned off by excessive writing; all they desire is brief, compressed and precise answers to questions. Ask senior colleagues about each tutor. You can also ask your tutor. Get to know how they want their questions to be answered. It enables you to know what to write and what not to write.

YOU MAY NOT DISCUSS EXAMS AFTER WRITING

Apostle Paul says, “One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.”^[70] It is not always wise to discuss exams after writing—especially if you still have other exams to write very soon. It has no positive effect. Discussing-exams-after-writing is like campaigning-after-election—it cannot change what has been done. The resulting effect could rather be neutral or negative. It could destabilize, discourage and unlock the gate to anxiety. It sometimes brings about emotional trauma. It could degenerate to self-condemnation, especially when co-students succeed in convincing you that you have written trash. It could sap self-confidence within. It could deteriorate the boldness to prepare for the next exams. It could bring about weeping in secret places. If not

handled with care it could lead to unannounced depression, especially if it is professional exams.

Examiners, being aware of your imperfection sometimes would ask you to *attempt* questions not to *answer* questions. Examiners have the final say. What you think is wrong might in the long run be the exact answer. Some of them do not lay much emphasis on your final answer; they only examine your level of understanding.

MAXIMIZE TIME IN EXAMS

Examiners do not just test how much you knows They also test how coordinated, orderly and intelligent you are. There is no defined rule stating that you must answer questions in a particular order say: 1,2,3,4, except if you are doing computer-based exams of which you have to answer the questions as they come up on the screen and you cannot go back and forth. Otherwise, go through the questions and start with the ones you can tackle immediately. The fact that a question is compulsory does not mean that it must be the first to be answered. To answer questions sequentially, you might end up missing out on the easiest of them all.

Do not spend excessive time on a question. Let's look at one of the questions given to a student writing a 70-mark exam and let's look at how they should handle the question:

2a (i) With the aid of a well labelled diagram, briefly describe five main parts of a vertical band mill [6 marks]

This question has three parts: (1) diagram of a vertical band mill, (2) listing of five main parts and (3) description of the parts, one after the other. The diagram might not attract more than one mark; therefore, it will be unwise of the student to spend too much time on drawing. The least they could score is half-mark. The listing might attract two marks while the brief description attracts three marks. It would also be unwise of the student to waste time writing stories; rather the student should describe each of the parts briefly. Many students do not excel because they do not know how to maximize time during exams. Examiners will assess you based on what you

put down; and not on how much you have inside of you that time did not permit you to write. Be wise!

SHUN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES

The integrity of a person is partially measured by how much they subject themselves to rules and regulations. Integrity also dictates how successful someone would be in life; therefore, examination malpractice is a form of rebellion against God which automatically positions a student as God's enemy and results in a 'but' (source of regret) in the person's life either early in life or much later. A student might appear smart enough to get away with such malpractices while in school, but they will eventually pay for it later for no one rebels against God and goes scot-free. It is a banner of opposition raised against God, and it must be avoided. This is because the authority that makes the rules and regulations are established by God.^[71] The outcome of the malpractice might be sweet on the surface, but deep within it will be bitterer than gall. So, shun it.

Exam malpractices in form of microchips or asking for answers from students during exams should be avoided. It gradually cuts off the source of God in the life of a student and makes them vulnerable to the attacks of the enemies. It may appear trivial, but it has very strong spiritual implications. For instance, it leads to the crushing of a student because it barricades one from the glory and exceptional favor of God and silently ushers in problems in the life of that person. It is Scriptural that there is a curse that accompanies every success harnessed through ungodly means.^[72]

Avoid examination malpractice. Be different. Be a pure academic reference. Attempt the questions that you can. Prepare for exams with the mindset that once you do not know the questions you will submit the answer booklet empty. Hand over the ones you have faithfully done into the hand of God who solely decrees victory for his people.^[73] Be wise!

✓ **Wisdom speaks**

Trust God to help you and believe in yourself. Write your exams with the highest integrity. By doing so, you are building up not only the potential within but true confidence. Failing and having a clear conscience is better than a passing and not being able to defend it.

SECTION 4: PRAY THE POSSIBILITY



CHAPTER 16: PRAY

“He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including the people of his inheritance—the Lord Almighty is his name.”^[74]

Having seen, planned and struck the possibility, the place of God must not be neglected. He remains the Maker of all things. Having mapped out the strategies, having put in all you could and maximized the time and opportunities that were open to you; becoming an invincible academic reference ultimately depends on God. He takes us to that height.

It is impossible to achieve an exceptional feat which is sustainable, and which stands the test of time without God. That is the reason the place of prayer cannot be ignored. It takes God in us to become exceptional. The builder labors in vain if God does not give the approval to go ahead. The watchmen endanger their lives if He does not support them.^[75] No king is saved by the size of his army.^[76] Students map out strategies to excel while God grants excellence. He is the One who decrees victory for his people.^[77]

Without him we are nothing. Our strength and the hope we have in ourselves are futile and can fail anytime. The only reliable hope which we can build our confidence upon is the hope we have in Him. “That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God...”^[78]

It takes us looking up to him for our face to be lightened and for shame to give way.^[79] Although horses must be made ready for the battle, victory lies in the hand of the Lord.^[80] Total dependence on the Divine catalyzes greatness and spurs us to more-than-imagined height. When we commit our plans into His hands in the place of

heart-felt prayer we are assured of His divine input and intervention. Outstanding success is guaranteed when God is our support. Without him we can do nothing. Those who belong to the household of grace are expected to constantly offer prayers to Him in order to be academically outstanding. Maybe you are considering this question: What about the ungodly who excel? Asaph was once in your shoes: "But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked...They are free from common human burdens...From their callous hearts comes iniquity...They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression...always free of care, they go on amassing wealth... When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin."[\[81\]](#)

A student who fails to get God into their academics will find it difficult getting it right in other areas of life. Any success not built on God is like ice in a warm environment. It will soon melt away.

THE MYSTERY BEHIND PRAYERS IN ACADEMICS

It is commonsensical to ask whether there is any reason to pray after taking all the necessary steps to excel academically. It is reasonable to question the necessity of praying after having mapped out the achievable reality of becoming a great success. Does prayer have anything to do with academic studies which are, in the real sense of it, mere physical activity? These and many others are the questions a rational thinker might consider in their mind. The truth is, we must pray our way to success. Except success is settled in the spiritual realm, there can be no manifestation in the physical. It is crucial for one to seek the consent of his Creator in everything one does.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer is the master key that unlocks every gate of impossibility. It brings to submission, every raging force both in the spiritual and

in the physical. It orchestrates the personality of the Almighty God into your academic pursuits; discloses your insufficiency to Him and gives you His fill of sufficiency. It neutralizes the physical atmosphere to your favor and brings down the power to do more.

Prayer opens the floodgate to inexhaustible grace, subdues every obstacle, lifts every barrier and clears every obstruction in our way. It averts generational curses and covenants that militate against success. It presents us as invincible in every academic challenge. It appropriates favor of tutors and external examiners to our side, aids exceptional academic performance beyond that which we can attain on our own. It ignites the person of the Holy Spirit in us to action.

Prayer makes a dullard brilliant by opening every brain that is locked up against assimilation and understanding and calms every storm that indirectly affects academic success like broken home, bad news, sickness, memory loss, and disappointment, among others.

I cannot overemphasize the role that prayers have played in my academic life right from childhood till date. During undergrad, the academic increase I experienced every session after my first year which propelled me from Second Class (Upper Division) to First Class is partly due to prayers. Prayer played a significant role during my graduate programs. Prayer is great humility in display especially when you have done all that is needed to be done. A life full of prayer is always full of testimonies. It is therefore expedient that we take prayers very seriously.

Academic excellence is worth fasting and praying for.

To excel academically means to bring God's word to fulfilment and as this is ever a threat to the kingdom of darkness; therefore, it must be handled prayerfully. Issues pertaining to forgetfulness, fear, memory loss or sickness during exams should not be handled with levity. Fervent and heart-felt prayers must be used to war against them. [\[82\]](#)

CHAPTER 17: THE BEING BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Everything that exists has an inventor. Someone, or better still a set of people are responsible for any occurrence that takes place. Every happening is always the product of a change, an action or a phenomenon. Nothing happens in vacuum; something or somebody must be responsible for it. Excellence is not an exception. There is a Being responsible for it. He is the Omniscience (all-knowing) who bestows the ability to excel.

HE GRANTS SUPPORT

The Scripture says, "In him we live and move and have our being."^[83] and "May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion."^[84] The three criteria that connote the presence of life in a person are: the ability to breath (live), advance (move) and make things happen (have being). Anyone lacking in any of these is not a complete living being. Surprisingly enough, all these are successfully done in the living God. It is only those who are in the living God who are living beings. The criteria are satisfied with Him, through Him, by Him, on Him, and above all in Him. He is a conducive environment that supplies every needed support to live, to move and to make things happen. It takes dwelling in this environment to do the outstanding.

HE LEADS THE WAY

"But thanks be to **God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession** and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere."^[85]

The decision to be outstanding can become a reality only if He leads the way. We have all been created at the beginning to depend on the Divine strength to excel. Whenever He leads the way, be assured of becoming victorious. The path of excellence is like a jungle. Frustration is inevitable except the way it is led by the One who knows it well and there is the assurance that you can never be confounded. It takes acknowledging Him as the overall boss to advance, travel far and do outstanding exploits^[86]. The terrain of excellence is designed by Him. You must have Him always before you to journey through it peacefully.

WITHOUT HIM...NO!

"Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God."^[87] Clay cannot make itself into an object. It takes the creative work of a potter to make something appealing out of it. The Almighty God is the Potter; we are the clay.^[88] He inputs in us the ability to make a difference. We cannot excel without Him neither can we succeed against Him.^[89] Neglecting Him leads to tension, disdain and confrontations on the path of excellence which one could hardly overcome. Regardless of the effort thrown into the task, without Him, the result becomes insignificant or futile. He should be the first factor to be reckoned with and the last to be appreciated^[90]. Any attempt to ignore Him brings disappointment, chaos and unnecessary challenges on our path. He can do without us, but we cannot do without Him. One cannot travel far be it academically or in other spheres of life without God.

GET GOD

Divine power is required for you to achieve that which you have set your heart on. The supernatural must work in harmony with the natural for the unusual to be seen. Determine to get God in your academic pursuits. Make Him a priority. Establish Him as King over your life. Access God. Access and harness His power in your life. Those who get Him are never at a disadvantage. We must all get to

a stage in which we would feel Him around us—His presence is not abstract. Everything a spiritual person does is spiritual. So academic pursuits should not be handled as a mere secular issue, it is spiritual, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. Be persistent enough to hear Him speak concerning your academics and concerning other areas of your life.

CHAPTER 18: THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The Scripture says, "The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day."^[91] It takes God in us to understand His word. Without a clear-cut understanding of His dictate, illusion takes over. Please note that the Scripture does not say that, "the path is a morning sun source (incandescent), and the intensity of its light is increasing, causing it to shine brighter and brighter." If that is the case, that means the glowing of the path could be intensified by adjusting the power of its incandescent.

The scripture says, "The path of the righteous is like the morning sun," not the morning sun. The path is not a light source (morning sun) itself, but it is like a light. However, it shines. That means the path receives light from a light source. The path of the righteous could shine simply because the righteous are the light of the world.^[92] A righteous person is the light shining on their path, hence, making their path glow and glitter. In this regard, the path of a righteous person is not the first subject of consideration; it is a righteous person which give the light to their path.

The portion of the Scripture could be re-capped thus: "*The path of a righteous person is a luminous material which receives rays of light from them, the intensity of which determines the brightness of the path. Hence, as a righteous person shines brighter and brighter, their path receive light to shine brighter and brighter.*"

Every child of God is a light. ***There is a latent incandescent source of equal potency in everyone^[93]. The degree of its glow however depends on an individual.*** Our level of

understanding is the fuel that powers the incandescence to glow. A person cannot outshine their understanding limit. It is impossible!

TANCTA SINTIN OF NESTRASA

The latent light source remains dormant if you see yourself as a mediocre. If you see yourself as incapable, you remain incapable and incapacitated. That is the reason no *light* will come forth from a person lacking in understanding. This was the case of a righteous man called Tancta Sintin of Nestrassa^[94]. Because he lacked understanding he produced no light. His path was full of darkness, though a righteous man he was.

The Scripture mentions that it is possible for one to be righteous and the path of one will still be full of darkness: "Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant (righteous)? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on their God."^[95]

DAYS OF DARKNESS

Tancta was groaning in darkness. Although he had a light source latent in him, he was in a state of total darkness and confusion. He had no clear vision and the direction for his life; he merely existed. Having held the impression that God was partial in his dealings, he had concluded that he could never make it and had subjugated himself to the ***ground state***. He had turned himself to the slave of those he called the favored rich. His situation was pathetic—he was without shelter, he had no future ambition, he had no plans, and was without purpose. "Let us live today," he would say, "for tomorrow death might come."

A GLIMPSE OF REVELATION

The words, *to trust in the Lord* means *to have faith in the Lord*; that is, with the Lord's support they can equally ignite the light source in them from the ***ground state*** to the glowing state. Tancta's path was full of darkness, not because he was neglected or God wanted to punish him, but because he was lacking in

understanding of the great light source in him. Incidentally, this light source was not meant for him alone to see, it was meant to also bring light to the paths of many. When Tancta became aware of this great treasure in him, he was ignorant of its potency. He did not know the level of brightness the light could produce; consequently, his little understanding supplied little fuel which glowed faintly from the inside of him out onto his path. The result was that although darkness partially vanished and he could see, the light produced was much deemed.

PROGRESSIVE UNDERSTANDING

Over time, Tancta discovered that he could produce brighter light. He walked in that understanding and his path glowed. As he advanced in understanding of the potency of the incandescence in him, his path kept shining accordingly. Eventually, he understood that he could produce a light that would light up his local environs and he tapped into it.

Consequently, people within his local community saw the incomparable light and came to walk in his path ignorant of the fact that they also could produce a better one. Tancta became the local champion who was not only producing light for himself alone, but also for others to thread along; even those who (out of envy) would not walk in his path still received the radiance of his light along their path too. He became an influence in his local domain.

One would continue to dwell in the company of the nonentities unless one stops undulating on the periphery of mediocrity.

A CRITICAL THOUGHT

One day, Tancta sat down to ponder on his past. He thought of how he started—the days of thick darkness and confusion when he used to think that God was a partial God, who made things work well for some and ignored some. He thought of how he moved from his dark world to generate dim light and how the dim light shone brighter until he eventually lit up his local community, as he

increased in understanding. As he meditated, a thought came to him: 'Tancta, you can light up the whole world!' He considered this and laughed at himself. 'I must not make a fool of myself,' he said, 'it is an impossible journey I want to embark on.' He could not imagine himself influencing people of diverse tongues, languages, cultures, and traditions scattered across the globe. He considered how poor, wretched and unworthy his background was. He considered himself as someone who was insignificant in the world. He thought about how backward his country was, compared to the advanced and developed nations. Even his village can scarcely be found on the map.

He asked himself: "How will I start?" "From where will I begin?" "If I start now, when will it happen?" "I am not thinking of only being an influence in my country, or in several other countries but I am setting my mind on being an intercontinental influence...I'd better not waste my time. I should just restrict myself to my local setting and keep giving glory to God. I don't want to disgrace myself." He despised himself.

ADVICE FROM FRIENDS

Tancta shared his thoughts with his close friends and associates and they advised him: "Godliness with contentment is a great gain. Why are you such an ingrate? Why this level of dissatisfaction and arrogance? You could have as well thought of becoming God. You are not a good Christian....No....No....No.....No. As a matter of fact, you are on your way to hell. We Christians must learn contentment... It was lack of contentment that made Satan lose his place in heaven... Many people in this community are praying to achieve one-tenth of what you have achieved... Why have you decided to die before your time?" So, they went on and on indicting and discouraging him, "Intercontinental influence or what do you call it? Did you ever think that you could ever catch up with people in the advanced world even until you breathe your last? They are not just advanced people; they also live in the advance world with advanced resources and technicality. We came to this world naked and we will leave naked. Fame and influence come to an end the day a person

breathes their last breath. Do not provoke God to anger. You are okay the way you are. Be where you are; be satisfied!"

CRITICAL RESOLUTION

After consulting with his friends, Tancta's zeal and passion became drastically depreciated. He considered their advice and decided to adhere to it. He almost refrained from his plans and was about to say, "I surrender." Then a Scripture flashed through his mind: "Now to Him Who, by...the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]..."^[96]

The word repositioned his thoughts; he was no longer in his past state of mind and he stood on his feet. His mental faculty seemed to be opened and his understanding buffered. He felt a form of newness in himself. Everything looked strange to him and he could hear these words in his heart: "You can make it, with God on your side."

If you are wondering whether the heart has an ear, know that God has configured us in such a way that it is the very part of our body that needs his word that hears it. Tancta told himself with great confidence in God: "I will be an intercontinental influence; my influence would be felt throughout the whole world."

AN EXCEPTIONAL STEPPING-OUT

Tancta guarded himself with the full armor of determination, and a strong faith in God which is the foundation for becoming great. People in his local domain did not only hear that he was up to something, they also saw it. Within a short time, a critical understanding came upon him and it takes such critical understanding to do outstanding exploits.

HE ACHIEVED IT

Since understanding fuels the latent incandescence in us, the critical understanding about the potency of this light source brought about a strange (but powerful) glow of the light source in him. The light shone on his path and lit up his local domain. It was so powerful that it penetrated through anything and everything that stood in its way. The brightness of the light was unusual. It traveled through his country, across the Atlantic and passed through several countries penetrating every obstacle in its way. It traveled from one continent to another till it reached the end of the earth. The light was noticed throughout the whole world.

ELEVATION RESULTS

Controversy arose with regards to the place where the light emanated from. They understood through research that it was from a small village called Nestrassa, the location of which was difficult to locate on the map. Tancta became the headline of national dailies and international journals. People began to come from various parts of the world to interview the man who was the source of the unignorable light that overnight he became a celebrity who had to turn down the requests of some international media in order to accommodate some.

Researchers all over the globe trooped in to Nestrassa to carry out investigations and research. Tancta's light became the research title for many a Doctoral and professorial research. He attained it. He got there because he caught the understanding which was imbued fully with as much knowledge and faith as he could muster, coupled with exceptional hard work and importunate praying.

POSSESS THE WORLD

Many of us are possessing trivial things when we are meant to set our hearts on possessing the world. We are satisfied with reading people's history, failing to grasp the truth that we are meant to be read. Every person (like Tancta) has been configured to make an impact on the world.

You are the light of the WORLD

The creation is eager to see the children of God doing exploits.^[97] This is because the creation knows the stuff the children of God are made of. It is however pathetic that the loaded are ignorant of the fact that they are loaded. They carry themselves around in the constant mold of mediocrity. Those who are meant to lead ignorantly subject themselves to servitude and slavery.^[98]

A person who is lacking in understanding will perish. "Whoever strays from the path of prudence comes to rest in the company of the dead."^[99] Many are those who appear to be alive but in fact can be said to have perished. To perish does not mean to give up the ghost and to give up the ghost does not mean to perish. As a matter of fact, some are no more but would never perish. They have immortalized their names by their indispensable exploits. Their memories are indeed a blessing! Some are living and will not perish. They are making great impact. They are too precious for the world to let go of them. Which category do you belong to?

A light who does not know who they are will keep searching for light in order to see the light of the day. Many are those who have relegated themselves to the **ground**, believing that nothing good could come out of their Nazareth; such have become so swamped by inferiority complex that they never see themselves coming out of it.

A light who does not know who they are will keep searching for light to see the light of the day

There is always an infinite spacious space for those who think great, see great, plan great, act great, pray great and set their hearts on becoming great. Have you sat up to think about what you will offer your generation and the ones coming after you? Except you sit up, ponders on why you are living, and find an answer which will help you walk in that understanding, you will die *uncelebrated* and may end up a waste to your generation. Many are those who have come and gone being *uncelebrated*. Many are those who are dying now uncelebrated and many will follow suit. Will you be *celebrated* or not? A person will never outshine the splendor with which they

believe God has clothed them. Determine to make a difference!
Strive hard to discover, understand and fulfill the purpose of God for
your life. See you at the top!

CONCLUSION

Seeing, planning, striking and praying the possibility are the Scriptural order upon which outstanding excellence is anchored. There was no one in the Scriptures who did a unique exploit without directly or indirectly traveling through the four distinct **stages**.

Joshua, son of Nun saw the possibility of leading Israel to dispossess the possessor of the inheritance God had promised the Israelites—a land flowing with milk and honey. He was never discouraged by the countless obstructions and circumstances around and within that were saying 'NO' to the promise. He planned the possibility by sending spies to the land in order to find out how it was, and to probably map out the direction of attack. He prayed the possibility indirectly by affirming the word of God in their hearings: The land has been given to us. They struck the possibility by engaging in physical battle with the enemies. In the long run, they possessed their possessions.

Nehemiah^[100], a slave in a foreign land saw the possibility of rebuilding the ruin of Jerusalem—the restoration of the wall and the gate. He planned in this regard by asking the King Xerxes whom he served for the permission to go and look through the ruin. He equally harnessed the materials to be used in rebuilding the wall. He had prayed the possibility earlier which unlock the door to exceptional favor and incomparable mercy. He equally prayed afterward when persecution arose in the process of building. He eventually struck the possibility by bringing to manifestation that which he had seen, despite many oppositions attempted stopping him.

When Virgin Mary received the visitation of angel Gabriel informing her that she would give birth to a child as a virgin, she strongly believed what the angel said. She was unswerving in belief.

She never questioned the possibility, but rather saw it. Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."^[101] She asked the question, not because she could not see the possibility, but to know how to plan the possibility. The question could be reframed as: "I can see what you are saying, but what is the methodology?" God did His part in planning by releasing the incubation of the Holy Spirit and the power to bring forth upon her; she did her part by not sleeping with any man at the conception. She prayed the possibility: "And Mary said, Yes, I see it all now: I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say."^[102] She eventually struck the possibility by giving birth to the Savior of the world as a virgin.

Jesus Christ saw the possibility of reconciling the world unto God: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"^[103] He saw the reality of bearing all the shame, sin and despise of the entire world and become a ransom for the entire human race. He spent the first thirty years planning the possibility. He planned the continuation of his work after his ascension by choosing the disciples. He also prayed the possibility. It came to a point whereby he was not going to bear the pain; he requested that the trouble should pass over him. Nonetheless, he concluded the prayer by affirming possibility, requesting that God's will be done. It was not easy, but it was worth it. Finally, he struck the possibility. He died on the cross bearing the sin of the whole world. He reconciled man back to God. All that is needed is for everyone to receive him as their Lord and Savior, and they would be saved. Without this confession, great disaster awaits them on the judgment day, for he would judge the whole world.^[104]

Esther, Gideon and Daniel, to mention a few also worked successfully with these principles and became exceptional and legends of their time. The irresistible passion coupled with strong determination to work with these principles will catapult you to the company of the outstanding. It opens the gate of opportunity to harness abundance. It automatically barricades you from the company of nonchalant and nonentities. It turns stumbling blocks to steppingstones. It spurs you to become an influence. It brings vision

to reality, attracts great minds to you, make you to become a unique leader and make sky your starting point. At the end of everything on earth, it equally gives you an assurance of making heaven if you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior.

REFERENCES

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- [2] 1 Kings 4:30 - 31
- [3] Numbers 12:6-8
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- [5] Psalm 125:1
- [6] Proverbs 30:30
- [7] Mark 10:27
- [8] Psalm 16:8
- [9] 2 Corinthians 3:18
- [10] Philippians 4:8
- [11] Hebrews 11:1
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- [13] Psalm 82:6
- [14] Isaiah 60:2
- [15] Isaiah 43:18-19
- [16] Mark 9:23
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- [18] Deuteronomy 28:13
- [19] Job 22:28-29
- [20] Proverbs 30:5
- [21] Psalm 1:1
- [22] 2 Kings 19:25
- [23] Lamentation 2:17
- [24] Proverb 16:3
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- [26] Genesis 1:6-10 (NKJV)
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- [29] Ephesians 3:20
- [30] Genesis 1:9 (KJV)
- [31] Jeremiah 5:22
- [32] Romans 9:16 (NKJV)
- [33] 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)
- [34] 1 Corinthians 15:10
- [35] Proverb 28:9
- [36] Genesis 8:22
- [37] Psalm 119:4
- [38] Romans 8:1 (Word in bracket is for emphasis)
- [39] Ecclesiastes 1:9-10, 1 Peter 5:8-9
- [40] Oatman, J., Count Your Blessings.

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- [41] Psalm 22:24
- [42] A paraphrase of Isaiah 42:13 (MSG)
- [43] Proverb 13:20
- [44] Proverb 14:15
- [45] All the locations mentioned are imaginary—Husterfung, Linkaj, Jafan, Convio and Setnaria.
- [46] Zechariah 4:10
- [47] Isaiah 42:13 (MSG)
- [48] Luke 16:8
- [49] Daniel 11:32b (NKJV)
- [50] 1 Corinthians 10:13-14 (TPT)
- [51] 1 Samuel 30:4
- [52] 2 Samuel 23:9-10
- [53] 1 Samuel 17:28
- [54] Those statements are popular with some tutors but might not be universal
- [55] 1 Samuel 17:33
- [56] 1 Samuel 17:42
- [57] Job 36:5
- [58] 1 Timothy 4:12
- [59] Job 14:7
- [60] Psalm 103:14
- [61] 1 Corinthians 15:10

[62] 2 Corinthians 13:14

[63] This is a true-life story. However, the real name is not used to cover the identity of the person.

[64] 1 John 1:1 (Emphasis mine)

[65] Hebrews 4:16

[66] Micah 2:7

[67] Romans 10:8-10, Acts 4:12, Acts 10:43, John 3:16-18

[68] Ecclesiastes 1:9

[69] Ecclesiastes 10:15

[70] Philippians 3:13

[71] Romans 13:1-2, 1 Samuel 15:23

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[73] Psalm 44:4

[74] Jeremiah 51:19

[75] Psalm 127:1

[76] Psalm 33:16

[77] Psalm 44:4

[78] 1 Timothy 4:10

[79] Psalm 34:5

[80] Proverbs 21:31

[81] Psalm 73: 2-18

[82] 2 Corinthians 10:4-6, Ephesians 6:10-18, Luke 18:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:13-16

[83] Act 17:28

[84] Psalm 20:2

[85] 2 Corinthians 2:14 (Emphasis mine)

[86] Daniel 11:32

[87] 2 Corinthians 3:5

[88] Jeremiah 18:5-6

[89] Proverbs 21:30

[90] Isaiah 48:12

[91] Proverb 4:18

[92] Matthew 5:14

[93] Psalm 84:11 and Malachi 4:2 refer to God as the Sun

[94] Tancta Sintin is an imaginary name, Nestrassa is imaginary location and this story is a fiction.

- [\[95\]](#) Isaiah 50:10 (Parenthesis mine).
- [\[96\]](#) Ephesians 3:20 (AMPC)
- [\[97\]](#) Romans 8:19
- [\[98\]](#) Ecclesiastes 10:7
- [\[99\]](#) Proverbs 21:16
- [\[100\]](#) Nehemiah 1-9
- [\[101\]](#) Luke 1:34 (MSG)
- [\[102\]](#) Luke 1:38 (MSG)
- [\[103\]](#) Isaiah 6:8
- [\[104\]](#) Act 17:31

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE HYMN

(To the tune of: "O happy day that fixed my choice")

1. I have the brain to be best
In all my tests and my exams
I will prepare and be the best
In all my tests and my exams

*I will always excel
Because success is my portion
I will read my books everyday
And ask questions if I have need
I will always excel
Because success is my portion*

2. I will keep academic friends
And pray always for my studies
I will have academic rise
Never have better yesterday

*I will always excel
Because success is my portion
I will never procrastinate
Bye-bye to bad attitude
I will always excel
Because success is my portion*

3. I will be attentive in class
And give no room to distraction
All my thoughts will be positive –
Thoughts of excellence in studies

*I will always excel
Because success is my portion
I will do all my assignments
My practical and my research
I will always excel
Because success is my portion*

4. I will draw reading timetable
And use it to read everyday
I will respect all my teachers
I will always stay encouraged

*I will always excel
Because success is my portion
I will have confidence in God
And give no room to any fear
I will always excel
Because success is my portion*

5. Away from me, the lax and laze
Away from me, the complacent
I have seen possibilities
I have drawn academic plan

*I will always excel
Because success is my portion
I will strike possibilities
I will pray possibilities
I will always excel
Because success is my portion*

6. Beyond the shore of studentship
I will abide with principles
Excellence will be my watchword
In all the areas of my life

*I will always excel
Because success is my portion
I will do exploits in this world
All to the glory of my God
I will always excel
Because success is my portion*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Samuel Ayinde holds a PhD in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and a Graduate Certificate in counseling from the RCCGNA Seminary, Greenville, Texas, United States. He graduated with a First Class grade in Wood Products Engineering and as the best graduating student of the department of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has authored a couple of books including Secret Canons for Academic Excellence, Make Your Life Count for God, Set An Example, Exploring the Multidimensional Mercies of God, and Secret Treasures For Purpose Fulfillment, Volume 1-9.

He is ordained and serving as an assistant pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God. He is passionate about people discovering, understanding, and fulfilling the purposes of God for their lives, with eternity in view.

BOOKS BY THIS AUTHOR

Attaining Academic Excellence: Becoming An Invincible Academic Reference

Let The Lord Be Magnified

Make Your Life Count For God

Set An Example

Secret Canons For Academic Excellence

Exploring The Multidimensional Mercies Of God