

# FELLOWSHIPING WITH GOD IN SPIRIT

## [REFLECTING ON THE ABSENCE OF TRUE WORSHIP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST]



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One-2-Three Worthy Living Ministries

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**OLAWUNMI BIRIYOK**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

This article is intended to shed light on the hindrances to effective worship in our walk with God, broaden the understanding of the Truth of the Gospel with respect to true worship by all Christians, and further encourage the art of true worship of God in Spirit. These are exemplified with a reflection on current Facts of malpractices inconsistent with the Truth of the Word and the Way Forward for better service. However disappointing and silly this may sound, the fundamental truth is this: the majority of Christians, especially the converts of some four decades ago to date, have not learned to properly deal or interact with God, in faith, through Christ Jesus, in truth and in spirit.

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**PRAYER:**

Dear God Almighty,

I pray in the name of Christ Jesus that, as I read this article, You give me the spirit of wisdom, understanding and discernment that I may understand and know the purpose for which You have commissioned this article to be written. Please give me the will power to run with Your truth unveiled by this article. Amen!

**INTRODUCTION:**

Christians are failing daily in their dealings with God Almighty. They are moved by the lies and deceits of the devil and its agents, after all that is all they see, hear and or all they are intentionally (and selfishly) taught. Until Christians act out their faith to deal with and worship God in spirit and in truth, their relationship with Jehovah God is marred ab initio, giving the devil a foothold from where to operate. Now is the time for all Christians to present ourselves as more of loyal virtuous beings than mere spirits of corruption. Needless to say, retuning of mindset and soul cleaning, that is, spiritual cleansing, will be required of the Body of Christ.

**BACKGROUND:**

The majority of Christians are yet to come to the solemn place of striving (with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit) to gain knowledge, understanding and the expressed application of Christ's humanity in our daily walk with God; for the purpose of bringing us a euphoric sense of excitement of witnessing and experiencing Christ's divinity, when the same is revealed at the appointed time and age by God Almighty. (Colossians 1:15-20)

**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHRIST'S HUMANITY AND CHRIST'S DIVINITY:**

**Christ's Humanity:** is His first coming, God's way of revealing Himself to us in the world. His time on earth in bodily form was to show us how to find salvation and the way to eternal life. God, in Christ Jesus, became a living, breathing, human being just like us, since we, the children of God, have flesh and blood; Christ, too, shared in our humanity (in flesh and blood) so as to conquer the devil that holds the power of death

by His death on the Cross at Calvary. Christ's humanity is the true light that gives light to every one - believers (Christians) and unbelievers (non-Christians). He came as a man full of grace and truth, and dwelled among us to teach us the same. The essence or vision of His coming was to save the whole world from falling, redeeming all who believed in His name and received Him into their lives.

Prior to Him dying on the Cross at Calvary to be conveyed into His divinity, His mission, which was His walk on earth, leading to the day He gave up the ghost, portrayed and taught us all God's standard of righteousness. The synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the New Testament Books of John, explicitly recorded these informative, yet life-transforming, works of reference for our daily use. How well we read and study these recordings with a correct spirit from within; propelling our motives to gain knowledge or otherwise, is yet another issue. It is safe to say that, in order to learn to properly deal or interact with God through Christ Jesus, in spirit and in truth, it is imperative for every Christian to learn golden lessons of faith and holiness from Christ's humanity. (Matthew 11:29)

**Christ's Divinity:** on the other hand, is His supernatural power and Supreme Being (not in bodily form but in the image of the invisible God). He and God are one in essence and nature. His second coming will be at God's appointed time, when He will establish His eternal kingdom. He will come in His completely divine being in glory, to congregate all Christians - both living and dead - into God's unified household and family under Christ's rule; to be with Him eternally. On this occasion, He will judge all of us for how we lived our lives on earth. Further, on the Day of Reckoning, those who have accepted Christ Jesus and found the salvation that He taught in His Humanity; and lived His way to eternal life, will be received to everlasting life in His unending Kingdom (Mark 13:26-27, Revelation 1:7).

Today, Christ Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Throne of God, and will come again, in His glory (divinity) to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom will have no end. If we are to be overjoyed when Christ's divinity is revealed, then all Christians must and should always cultivate an honourable lifestyle that glorifies God and live it daily to the end of age.

**COMMONPLACE PRACTICE** in the Christendom made in error is this: In a bid to

worship God in spirit, or to be spiritual in the Christian faith, the majority of Christians, both young and old, tend to magnify Christ's Divinity - His divine being - in the hope of eternal life. Unfortunately, in the process, they minimise His Humanity that comes with the essential life-transforming faith and righteousness lessons He taught in bodily form and thus fail to embrace the moral conduct that is capable of sparing us the harsh consequences of judgement. It must be stressed without reservation, that Christ Jesus is both God and Man. Hence, while we wait patiently for His glory to be revealed, our joy should be found in that fact that we are blessed to have had God manifest himself in Christ in the way that He did, with all the added benefits of the priceless teachings - the truth - we have in and from Him.

Without a doubt, the two most important burning questions every Christian must ask and wholly concern themselves with are these: *What is meant by Christ's humanity? And how may I learn, know, understand and apply it in my life?*

The quest for answers to these questions opens the glorious gate to the divine house of treasures - God's treasury - waiting to fill those who love God and worship Him in spirit. Having said so, it is empirical to state that the glorious gate may be opened only by the Almighty God's gift of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know Christ better, whilst enlightening the eyes of our hearts in order that every Christian who truly believes may know Christ.

### **VITAL LESSONS FROM CHRIST'S HUMANITY**

He is merciful, loving, kind and understanding. Everywhere Christ went, He did good (Acts 10:38). In Him, God revealed His nature and essence in a way that could be seen (visible), and in a way that could be touched (tangible) 1John 1:1. He came to highlight God's mercy, love and forgiveness – He fulfilled the law, so that we are no longer justified under the law but justified by the grace of His blood. He conquered death to give you and me eternal life.

How Christ Jesus lived on earth, among us human beings, ought to be the model of righteous living for all Christians; if we are to be sincere and truthful to ourselves and, indeed, our Maker, in true worship.

**Lesson 1: CHRIST; HIS THOUGHTS WERE ALIGNED TO GOD'S:** Jesus Christ establishes His identity as the Son of God, and the fact that He and God are one in

essence and nature; as a result, He was determined to see the purpose/vision of His coming in the flesh through to a successful end. In John 4:34, He said His spiritual nourishment - food - was to do the will of God who sent Him and to finish the work of salvation. Really and truly, have you established your identity in Christ? In order to do so, one has to submit his or her all to Him and be willing to live by His teachings and the Word of God. Are you, like Christ Jesus, also determined to be like Him and carry out His great commission? This entails stepping out of your comfort zone to navigate unfamiliar terrains, for the purpose of sharing the Good News of the Gospel to all; uniting them with Christ, through baptism, in the three-in-one nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Christ has taught us all about the Father and His Kingdom Principles - the acceptable standard of conduct for all Christians. In particular, He taught us how to live by real faith in Him by aligning our thoughts to His if we are truly in Him and He in us. Jesus Christ is our perfect teacher who came in the flesh and taught us how we should think in line with His and God the Father's thought: walking in unconditional love in our service to others, dealing with God and others in humility, how to wholeheartedly forgive and be obedient without picking and choosing which commandments to obey and which not to, and how to be selfless in our service to God - that is, what we give out for God to humankind, always, in gratitude and in prayer.

All children of God must walk and live within the guidelines of this unique model (Matthew 5:3-12).

**Lesson 2: CHRIST; HIS DEEDS WERE DIRECTED BY GOD:** Christ lived righteously without sin yet humbled Himself in the sight of God to the point of death on the Cross (Phil.2:8-10) for a successful finish of the work of salvation. Christ did nothing on His own authority - everything He did and spoke was just as God had instructed Him (John 12:49-50). He relied solely on the Spirit of God that empowered Him (Acts 10:38). He prayed for strength and will-power (Matt 26:39), *"My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

He is our perfect model of life - He became flesh, born to show us what we are to become, if we humble ourselves in true worship. His mission was to show us how we are to live and operate within God's parameters, furthermore, He gives us the power to

live as we ought to, if only we will submit our all to Him, in order to follow His instructions wholeheartedly, and the lead of His Spirit within us.

**Lesson 3: CHRIST; HIS ACTIONS WERE TO GLORIFY GOD:** He said His food was to do the will of God who sent Him and to finish the work - what a glorious statement! He could, of Himself (in the flesh) do nothing, but copied what He saw God do at any point in time. He prayed continually and God showed Him what to do. Jesus Christ relied on God totally (John 5:19-20, 30). He cultivated the right attitude of attributing the progress He was making as being down to God who is in Him and working His miracles through Him (John 14:10-11). Jesus Christ believed in God Father and did not consider Himself equal to Him; though He was in the form of God (Phil.2:5). His actions truly brought God glory on earth by completing the work of salvation God assigned Him to do (John 17.4).

In John 4:24, we are told that God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. To worship God in spirit and in truth, we have to have received and believed in Jesus Christ; and be given the right, the power and the authority to become children of God (John 1:12-13). We therefore have to be born again into the Kingdom of God with the Holy Spirit indwell us. When we do, it unfolds the beginning of Eternal Life with Him and a pathway to entering into a lasting relationship with God, here and now into eternity.

### **REFLECTING ON THE ABSENCE OF TRUE WORSHIP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Here, we will be using our Ministry's '3D Tool' to discern the facts of the state of play, discover the truth to highlight the commonplace malpractices and encourage all to determine to run with the truth and worship God, with the right attitude, in spirit and in truth.

It is important and prudent of every Christian to come to the knowledge of TRUE WORSHIP, what it really is, the essence of it and the end result (i.e. expectation of our hope for the promise of eternal life).



**TRUE WORSHIP** - *What it really is:* It is the expression of reverence and adoration *with the right attitude* for God - who is Spirit. It is also our great admiration or devotion shown towards Him *in faith* and *humility*, and His principles in *wholehearted obedience* - the fundamental truth that serves as the foundation of our belief.

*The essence of it:* I am sure you will agree with me that our great admiration or devotion shown towards God and His fundamental truth - the basis of our belief - is progressive and existent and should, without a doubt, be a daily lifestyle not limited to *time* and *place*. Therefore, our God-honouring lifestyle cannot and must not be limited to attendance of religious rites or ceremonies. It must, further, not be confined to church services, Christian crusades and gatherings, conferences or revivals. Our true worship is our personal relationship with God through Christ Jesus, the foundation of our belief. God's relationship with us is personal and ongoing - an outgoing, life-giving, unconditional love not limited to a particular place but is experienced everywhere by all who worship Him anywhere at any given time, with the right spirit. Why then, must our worship of Him be limited to time and confined to space? Our reciprocal personal relationship with God must be based on unwavering faith and absolute trust in His ongoing love.

*The end result:* Hence, in our daily walk with Almighty God, in order to walk uprightly with godly attitude, and be found to be fellowshipping with Him in spirit and in truth, which is our true worship of Him; it is necessary and of utmost importance, that all true followers of Christ take a good hard look at Christ Jesus every day, focusing on the lessons learned from His humanity, time and time again. Christians must also embrace Christ's thought process; let their deeds be directed by the holy God in accordance with His precepts and all their actions aimed at glorifying God through Christ Jesus, that is, if we are to press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

However, the same cannot be said of the way and manner of worship in the Christendom in recent times to date. Heresies in Churches from time immemorial have encouraged and enabled the majority of Christians to set aside the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, reverting to the practices of the Old Testament laws, which Christ has already perfected. The preaching of falsehoods, as a calculated attempt, to intentionally encourage idolatry in the body of Christ, excludes and continues to negate

the love of God, by painting Him as a wicked and difficult God, whose favour can only be earned by our own or by one's "good" deeds. Thereby, drawing gullible Christians back into darkness from whence Christ has redeemed them and brought them into the pure light of God. It is worth mentioning that, the parochial attitudes of some teachers, preachers, leaders and prophets in the Body of Christ - the Church - do not wholly identify with Christ's message of truth and salvation. As a result of this, the majority of Christians in modern day churches blatantly fail to rest on God's power that saved them; in order to sweetly fellowship with the Holy Spirit they are sealed with. Christians are yet to walk by FAITH (spiritually) and not, as they currently and continuously walk, by sight (in the physical).

Let us look at some of the heresies, falsehood and parochial attitudes that Christians have erroneously bought into.

**DISCERN FACTS:** We are yet to acknowledge our weaknesses in this life and accept we can only traverse it (life) with God's moral compass - which is, His Word and the working power of the Holy Spirit in prayers, love, hope and faith. Outside of this spiritual realm, we navigate the storms of life physically with diabolical (ungodly) compasses at our own peril. Rather, we must seek God diligently to know Him, and live for Him. There is more to gain than lose, in asking God to use one for the purpose for which He created him/her - so one is not counted a waste of space at the end of time. Remember, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing. We, thus, cannot afford to dance to the tune of our flesh.

Notwithstanding the Word of God in the New Testament Book of Romans 10:4, that clearly states that "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*"

Today, the Truth of the Word of God is blatantly replaced with self-indoctrination psychology, other man-made doctrines or own brand of Christian legalism (Philippians 3:18-19) - giving some Christians false hope with extra laws to obey under duress with the hope of extorting money from them - in areas of;

(a) **Tithes and offerings** - various doctrines in circulation, void of understanding, are designed to put ungodly fear into the lives of innocent Christians with damning threats

of financial hardship, terminal illness and or eternal unrest in hell. Tithing should be done properly if it is being practiced at all, in the place where God chooses to make His name abide, that the giver may learn to fear the Lord always. Henceforth, ensure your tithe is given not at the dictate of man but in accordance with Biblical Tithing Principles (Deuteronomy 14:22-29), for God's blessing in all the works of your hands. Whereas, Christ, who is the end of the law (law of tithing inclusive) for righteousness to everyone who believes, has become a surety of a better covenant found in His blood (Hebrews 7:22), leaving all who believe to freely and sincerely worship God in spirit and in truth. Today, the majority of Churches amplify the law of tithing; yet fail to make clear and or diligently teach the truth about it (freewill tithe or constraint tithe) to the Seed of Abraham (descendants of Abraham according to the flesh).

Tithing properly, as a service to God, is the key! Successful tithing, without a doubt, equates to good and excellent service to God. Hence in this day and age, without permitting another to subdue you into inappropriate tithing, devoid of God's blessings and benefits, it is advisable to pray and seek God's spiritual guidance with wisdom on – (a) when to tithe, (b) where to tithe and (c) to whom to tithe - in order to avoid tithing to the devourers, and tithing into the devourers' house or worse still, to the synagogue of Satan, that is wholly devoted to tearing apart the Gospel of Truth. It is never too late to let go of the past, with its bad and ungodly practices, and begin to obediently and faithfully follow God's principles (not heresies) on successful tithing as we ought to.

(b) **Seed sowing, fundraising or partnering with ministries** - the majority of Prosperity churches/ministries end almost all of their church services, crusades, conferences and meetings with fundraising or seed sowing. However sound the sermon of the day might have been, it is deliberately marred with unethical and devious stories and falsely amplified non-existent experiences, to hype up congregants in a bid to extort money from them. They, commonly and deceitfully, misapply sound Biblical verses, such as, *“give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you”* (Luke 6:38). These very words were spoken by Christ to encourage us to walk in His forgiving spirit, treat others generously, and to be compassionate and gracious without judging them. It connotes no financial gains but a

warning of what to expect to come back to each and every one of us having been weighed in the balances in judgement of full measure. Hence, rather than these leaders themselves obeying Christ's command, then preaching and teaching Christians aright like Christ did, so we are not found wanting; they instead divert focus on the truth to the misinterpretation - as they pitch for their bellies. Their hearts are indeed, far from the truth of the Gospel and God.

It is noteworthy that, wherever seed is mentioned in the Bible, it is either to do with the offspring of Abraham which includes Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1) or agriculture, as seed in the Old Testament was of vital importance because of the heavy dependence on agriculture - that is to say, the social system of ancient nations, whose economic composition was mainly agricultural, depended on agricultural produce for survival - or metaphorically applied to the Word of God as yielding good fruits. Hence rather than encouraging Christians to be fruitful in their walk with God, sowing the Word in the lives of others by witnessing in obedience to the Great Commission given to all; they are instead fleeced. These so-called prosperity preachers and teachers fail to feed their members with prolific seed (John 21:15-17).

In light of the above, money is not and cannot be considered a seed. Therefore metaphorically speaking, money sown as seed in the so-called churches cannot and will not yield good fruits, or better still, any fruit at all. What these false preachers, leaders and teachers are encouraging Christians to do is to pay (fund their worldly habits) them their hard earned money in exchange for empty biblically unsound promises that are neither here nor there. Unfortunately, contrary to various prevalent and strange doctrines on this rampant practice in this day and age, money cannot buy God's blessings, which are the by-products of our wholehearted obedience to God, His commands and Christ Jesus' teaching. It is time to wisen up and live obediently, as true followers of Christ Jesus.

The duplicity and cold manipulation in their dealings with congregants in the aspect of seed sowing, fundraising or partnering with ministries, negates Christ's instructions in Matthew 10:8 - "*freely you have received freely give.*" In addition, it is clear; they do not faithfully obey and share the truth of the Word to encourage all to remain in it by sowing the seed of obedience to God Almighty, and not to enrich these so-called prosperity preachers and teachers.

(c) **Purported cover of spiritual fathers/mothers and releases** from them is abnormally inconsistent with the orthodox practices of mentoring as observed, for example, in the lives of Elijah/Elisha in the Old Testament and Paul/Timothy in the New Testament. These Prophets/Ministers shared a common vision, which was to directly point all Christians to the ultimate source of the ultimate power of God's Holy Spirit in us and His curative Word. This cannot be said of the current practices in modern Churches between General Overseers/Junior Pastors in the Body of Christ (Zechariah 4:6). Now, because the senior pastors, or pastors with personalised church laws, demand to be venerated, they ensure their rules and regulations, however much the same are biblically unsound, must nonetheless, be strictly adhered to. Careful analysis of these self-indoctrination psychology, man-made doctrines or own brand of Christian legalism, unveils unorthodox beliefs prevalent in modern day personalised and prosperity churches - a flagrant violation of all that Christ stands for. These man-made doctrines - designed to focus on human leadership rather than Christ's leadership - are taught with the intent to distant members, of any one given congregation, from the grace that is found in Christ Jesus. Instead, it purposefully diverts the focus and attention of their members to a nurturing relationship with their teachers, preachers, leaders and prophets ('spiritual' fathers and 'spiritual' mothers); thereby, trampling the Son of God underfoot. Unlike the Old and New Testament Prophets/Ministers above-mentioned, the relationship (commonly referred to, these days, as covering) between spiritual fathers and mothers - the so-called senior pastors, general overseers and senior leaders - have with the junior pastors and leaders, is not wholly reliant on God and His Spirit. While the Biblical Prophets/Ministers respected and acknowledged each other's strengths and weaknesses, they were both committed to God wholeheartedly, and drew their strength from Him. Hence, they happily 'released' their protégés as valuable members of God's family to equip, encourage and build the Church - the Body of Christ Jesus. Release today, in the majority of churches, is a tug of war resulting in bad blood, accompanied with a barrage of curses.

(d) **Deliverance from ancestral curses and sins** (Galatians 3:13-14) **and the breaking down of imaginary and unknown diabolical altars** (Colossians 1:13-14), supposedly to have been erected/raised by our progenitors and today, stand as hindrance to both our physical and spiritual advancements in the Christendom and in the Body of Christ, are

just other examples of glaring falsehoods to the discerning, that are commonly preached or rather pitched, by way of extorting money, and confusing Christians in the process. This has confused many Christians and truth-seekers, leaving them to question the loving and forgiving nature of God. The false teachers, preachers and prophets of these lies, rely heavily on Old Testament practices of peace and sin offerings and the Word that says “our fathers sinned and are no more, but we bear their iniquities” (Lamentations 5:7), while disregarding the Word of God in the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel 18:19-24, which makes absolutely clear, that the soul who sins shall die; no one shall bear the guilt of the other. Yes, our ancestors, forefathers, great-grandparents and grandparents sinned and are no more, but *today*, by the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in whom we have redemption for the forgiveness of sins - we are declared not guilty, no longer stand accused and or are accursed; therefore we shall not bear their guilt, amen. The Good News is: *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us all with wisdom and understanding”* (Ephesians 1:7-8). Interestingly, the Old Testament practices of peace and sin offerings - falsely preached/pitched this time round, is not done with the blood of bulls and goats, as one can imagine, but with the congregants’ hard-earned money; who, sadly, buy into their lies and end up spending their wages for what does not satisfy. Not only does this falsehood portray our merciful God otherwise, but counts the precious blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, shed on the cross for our salvation, a common thing (Hebrews 10:29).

(e) **Sale of anointing oil or olive oil, handkerchiefs, blackcurrant juice/drinks, candles, holy water, mustard seeds and the like.** The mere fact that these are sold, and are for sale, in the Body of Christ, is a fallacy based on unsound biblical belief (Acts 8:20). Furthermore, Christians are led to believe the Spirit and power of God rest in these items contrary to His Word (Acts 17:24), and the application of same, will bring desired expectations, failing which, the Christian applicator lacks faith. In other words, there is no refund of money if the item is or items are found to be unfit for purpose. The use of anointing oil in modern day churches, has taken on a whole different meaning, due to its pecuniary advantage to the church. It is sold to and used on both believers and unbelievers - as long as they are willing to pay. By contrast, the anointing oil mentioned in the Bible, especially, in the Old Testament Book of Exodus 30:22-33, was specially

made under strict instructions for specific use to symbolise the Holy Spirit. And in the New Testament Book of James 5:14-15, it was to be used as medicine in the name of the Lord. Handkerchiefs were not merely sold for use by anybody and everybody. We read in the New Testament Book of Acts 19:11-12, that God did extraordinary miracles through Paul. He worked unusual miracles by Paul's hands, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick to heal and cure them, and even evil spirits went out of them. These handkerchiefs were brought from Paul's body to perform miracles to glorify Christ, not from mass production for commercial purposes and gains, to glorify false teachers, preachers/pitchers and or prophets. Christians must watch what they buy into and be circumspect in their dealings with man-made items (non-exhaustively) listed above, purporting to carry the Spirit and power of God. These false preachings and practices are a calculated attempt to intentionally encourage idolatry in the body of Christ. Do not partake in or encourage it.

(f) **The malpractices of Anointing and Impartation services** in the Body of Christ incapacitate otherwise true Christians for true worship of God or from worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Those who know and acknowledge this fallacy, sadly, stumble at the next hurdle of, yet again, another malpractice of gagging with misapplied biblical truth found in the Old Testament Books of 1 Chronicles 16:22 and Psalm 105:15 - warning against (i) touching God's anointed ones who were set aside for specific purposes and assignments and (ii) to do His prophets, on whom His Spirit has come upon, no harm. Contrary to this fear instilled in Christians today, for the purposes of gagging them, the Word of God says in the New Testament Book of Titus 1:11-14 - to rebuke sharply those who teach things which they ought not, that they may be sound in faith who have turned from the truth, and not give heed to their fables and commandments. Why may this be? Perhaps because all Christians with the Holy Spirit indwell them can also prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged in the faith. Prophecy is always given to strengthen the Church, and not to put fear into others for the purposes of manipulating them.

No one has the power to seal you with the Holy Spirit except God, hence, the parochial attitudes of some teachers, preachers, leaders and prophets in the Church, the Body of Christ, purporting to anoint Christians with the power of the Holy Spirit is wholly inconsistent with Christ's message of truth and of salvation. The unfortunate

malpractices encouraged by these so-called teachers, preachers, leaders and prophets in the Church, in a bid to grow or expand their respective ministries; count Christ's blood of the covenant by which they (and we) were sanctified a common thing, and insult the Spirit of grace thereby arousing God's anger. They must desist from competing with each other to grow their flock and accept the truth that increase and growth is by the Spirit of God who rewards faithful hard work. It is no secret that one cannot reap bountifully having sown sparingly or at all. Hence, they must put off, in their midst, self-seeking aggrandisement, greed, envy and lust, which are sensual and demonic and unavoidably, cause confusion and usher in every evil thing one can think of. They must desist from glorifying the anointing on them (if any) more than the Giver of the anointing (God).

The truth is; from the moment you receive Christ Jesus into your life and believe in Him, four glorious things instantaneously happen; (i) *God establishes you in Christ Jesus* - setting you up on Christ's firm foundation of truth to do the works that Christ did on earth and even greater. (ii) *He anoints you* for greater works in His kingdom here and now - sanctifying and ordaining you to walk righteously in wholehearted obedience to Him and His commandments, sharing the Good News of the Gospel with all to encourage the broken-hearted, set free the oppressed in captivity and heal yourself and the sick. (iii) *He seals you* with His seal of ownership to show the world who your Master is - as you identify yourself as His faithful servant and, (iv) *He gives you the Holy Spirit in your heart as a guarantee* of your salvation and the undeniable truth that you belong to Him and will surely, without a doubt, receive all His promised benefits and more (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

Further, the meaning of impartation in the Word of God is to encourage and share, be it the message of the gospel of salvation (1Thessalonians 2:8), or wisdom (Proverbs 29:15), or spiritual gifts as in Romans 1:11. It is God who gives according to the grace that is given to us and by the measure of our faith. Therefore, teachers, preachers, leaders and prophets, who are by themselves, mere mortals, are incapable of and are powerless to (i) anoint you with the power of the Holy Spirit because you are already anointed by God (1John 2:20, 27) and (ii) impart any spiritual gift, however much you pay them - as they tend to practise these days - because Spiritual gifts are from God Almighty, they are bought *without* money and *without* price - they are priceless (Isaiah 55:1-3, Romans 12:3-8). They can only share their spiritual gifts, knowledge or wisdom and



the like, *only* if they possess the same; then, encourage you to walk in them to glorify God.

What a fallacy in danger of distorting Christ's Good News! Look around you, take stock of your life and ask the Holy Spirit to open your spiritual eyes to see if you might have subconsciously encouraged any or all the afore-mentioned malpractices and even more, and repent while you still have breath to do so. Resist the tendency to let your perceived limitations, self-condemned past, hostile environment, family background, marital problems and the like, have the better of you - and do not allow these false teachers, preachers, leaders and prophets to prey on you. Rather seek to know the Truth, read your bible daily and digest what you read for a blessed application to intimately know Christ Jesus and God. Surround yourself with the truth of the Word; when in doubt, ask Christ all the questions you might have concerning in-depth knowledge of Him and His righteousness that has been known to all. Now is to know the Gospel truth, and the Gospel truth, without a shadow of doubt, shall set you free indeed.

**DISCOVER THE TRUTH:** Without holiness no one will see the Lord. Christ Jesus has sown into our lives, the fruit of righteousness in peace. Let us now fellowship with God with a pure heart, willing to yield totally to His authority and bear good fruits without partiality and indeed, without hypocrisy. There is absolutely nothing holy in the malpractices listed above. Now, more than ever, is the time to take reasonable, calculated steps to put our unwavering (i) **faith** in Christ Jesus, (ii) **faith** in the power of His resurrection and (iii) **faith** in becoming like Him in His death.

The truth is this: Christ's Spirit dwells in all Christians, because our bodies are dead to sin, and our spirits are alive because of His righteousness (Romans 8:10). Therefore, we are not to live according to the desires of the flesh (physical), that profits nothing; but by His Spirit (spiritual) so we can always be in true worship, worshipping God in spirit and in truth. We must give the more earnest heed to the things (truths) we have heard, lest we drift away. We cannot earnestly heed to the truths we have heard, unless we train ourselves in the ways of our Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. For this very reason, we are warned and reminded, in order to be alert in the Spirit, of the following;

(a) **To test the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error** and not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God (or of contrary dark and demonic spirits); because many false prophets have gone out into the world having sold their souls to the devil. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (Christ's humanity, and preaches/teaches salvation and righteousness - Christ's humanity vision and mission) is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1John 4:1-6)

Do we obediently hearken to the above words of wisdom to test the spirits? Do they confess Christ's humanity and believe it in their works to actively build the Body of Christ? Do they preach salvation and righteousness? Let these be our food for thought when presenting ourselves in any Christian gatherings.

(b) **Salvation and Righteousness are of paramount importance** in the lives of true worshippers, yet these are glaringly not preached, taught and/or encouraged in the Christendom and Body of Christ.

(i) **SALVATION**: Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through **faith**. (Galatians 3:13,-14). Therefore we can rightly conclude that our justification is by faith, outside the deeds of the law. If this is so, then our true worship must be based on faith and faith alone in God; not on our performances for God. The malpractices discerned above are wholly and totally devoid of faith in God. The Old Testament laws and practices are of no value in that they do not bring salvation to those who keep or practise them. The truth of the Word of God is; without faith it is impossible to please God and you cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore, if we hold ourselves out as Christians, and believe we belong to God's family, then we must set the wheel of our faith in motion; to believe that our heavenly Father is Almighty God, and a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him in true worship.

Since we are God's field and building - His temple, let each and every one of us, from today onwards, take heed how we build on the foundation laid for us by our Lord and Saviour. The foundation of the Church of all believers, and our lives, is Christ Jesus. Therefore as we are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit, everything we are and do must reflect Christ's model of righteous living for all Christians. On this note, let us begin to work out our *own* salvation with fear and trembling, being very careful about what we believe, practise and how we live our Christian lifestyle - whilst expressing our reverence and adoration for God in spirit and in truth.

(ii) **RIGHTEOUSNESS:** Christ's teachings on righteousness are to encourage us to live to please God, our Righteous Father, in true worship - respecting our bodies without any form or manner of abuse whatsoever. We are encouraged to pursue peace with all people, and *holiness*, without which no one will see the Lord. Humanly speaking, this appears to be undoable, even with all efforts put into it. This is because the religious duties we perform under the law these days in the Christendom, without a personal relationship with God, will not make us righteous and thus hinders our true worship of God. This is why our loving God, in His infinite mercy, has made Christ Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become His righteousness. (2 Corinthians 5:21) God's righteousness was poured into all who have put their trust in Christ Jesus and believed in Him. This is a necessary gracious act for all believers in the Christendom, if we are to see our holy God, who does not condone or excuse sin and unrighteousness. Hence, to be in God's holy presence in true worship, we must first and foremost, renounce our sin, ask for His forgiveness with penitent heart and trust Him to forgive us, cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and remember our sins no more (1John 1:9).

Accordingly, in this state, as God is, so are we in the world because His heart of righteousness has gone out to us through His indescribable gift of grace in Christ Jesus and His Holy Spirit. We must thus live our lives to mirror that of Christ's humanity; wholeheartedly obeying God and loving and serving all created in the image of God. It is worth mentioning that whoever keeps Christ's commandments abides in Him, and He, abides in the person. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us (1John3:24).

Let us therefore, rely totally on His Spirit in faith, to help us worship God in spirit and in truth. Now is the time to step up our true worship in holiness with God so as to experience the great comfort and power His Spirit gives in our lives, here and now - a foretaste of the benefits of our eternal life in God's holy presence.

(c) **Knowledge of the Truth** is of great importance in our true worship of God; it is a wellspring for life, an inexhaustible fountainhead, against which nothing else can thrive. Consequently, our lives must be ruled by the Word of God because it is God's mode of communication with us - both interpersonal and interpretive, guided by His Spirit. God's Word is life and truth and Christ is the Truth, the standard of all truths and of course, He did not deviate from Himself. Hence, if we are in Him and He in us, then we need not deviate from the truth that we know. Rather, contrary to the flagrant malpractices currently observed in the Christendom and Body of Christ, we must hold fast and remain steadfastly in it. The truth is to be applied at all times in our daily lifestyle; without compromising the same.

The truth - the Word of God - must constantly be read and studied; in order to gain understanding of Christ's teachings and God's commandments for the sole purpose of wholeheartedly obeying it. God's Word as we know is spirit and life. We cannot but choose to gain excellent knowledge of the Word to have everlasting life. Consequently, with Holy Spirit-inspired wisdom and understanding of the truth, we may model our righteous living on our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. How?

Firstly, is to think like Christ Jesus thought in bodily form: We must align our thoughts to Christ's and aspire, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be like Him - submitting our all to Him in humble obedience to His teachings and the Word of God. The more we grow to be like Jesus Christ, the easier it becomes to discover our true self, created in the similitude of God - that is, the person we were created to be. This helps us to purify ourselves and our hearts, by keeping morally straight. Our personal relationship with God through Christ Jesus must come from within our spiritual condition, our spiritual nourishment, which is the Word of God - and the will to do His will. We must also establish our identity in Him to appreciate the fullness of Christ that we have been given and begin to act out our faith in all circumstances accordingly- so as to avoid the dangers of having the Word distorted and, in the process, be led away in deceit. Today, let us set our priorities right in life, by setting our minds on heavenly

things/qualities, and build our absolute trust and unwavering faith in God, through Christ Jesus.

Secondly, is to do as Christ Jesus did while in the world: In all that we do, our deeds must be done in the humility that comes from wisdom and we are to be directed by Christ's teachings in faith powered by His Spirit. We are to follow His instructions and the lead of His Spirit within us. If we are to please God with our deeds, then the same *must not* be done with/by our own power and might, but by the Spirit of God. It is necessary to humble ourselves like Christ did, in true worship, so as to know what we are to become. We are to trust Him always with the instructions of our deeds, so as to make our personal relationship with God right; and be fit for eternal life. We are told, *the just shall live by faith* (Romans 1:17), and the fact that God will not be pleased with us should we shrink back from living by faith in Christ Jesus (Hebrews 10:38). Hence, whatever we do in word or deed, let us do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Knowing for a fact that we cannot change what God has planned for our lives, it further goes without saying that our mistakes can be used by God to accomplish His plan for us. Like the apostle Paul, we also must ask "what shall I do, Lord" (Acts 22:10). Are we ready and willing to follow Christ's instructions as to how to go about His divine plan for our lives? Many a time, it entails giving up what we are comfortable with, what we love most and moving out of our comfort zone and the like. Let us cultivate a godly subservient spirit to humbly ask God to teach us His ways and lead us in it - and rely solely, on His Spirit to empower us, like Christ did. Knowledge of the Truth is indeed, of great importance in the art of true worship. Let us thus search through Scriptures to walk and operate in the light of God's Word, staying on course – the right path of the God-driven purpose and plan for our lives - which will inevitably, reveal false values and philosophies, contrary to God's precepts.

Thirdly, is to act in the same way that Christ Jesus acted on earth: All of our actions must show that they are done in and with the love and fear of God, driven by the Holy Spirit's promptings and counsel in order to glorify God completely. Therefore, our motives, for doing anything and everything must be consumed with His love and fear. It involves, primarily, acknowledging God, receiving His counsel through His Spirit, relying heavily on the Holy Spirit's counsel and guidance, and never leaning on our own understanding. Any action of ours that does not shine the light of God in our lives

is ungodly, and calls for immediate repentance. Even the good we know to do, if we do not do it, is sin that does not glorify God; such as (i) keeping silent and allowing malpractices of the Word to thrive in the Christendom, (ii) following the crowd blindly to dabble in the occult and witchcraft, (iii) knowingly participating in ungodly practices, (iv) blatantly refusing to share our knowledge of the truth, and (v) assisting or encouraging others to blur the pure light of God with wishy-washy man-made doctrines and laws; fuelled by contrary demonic spirits.

Glorifying God with our actions is our true worship of Him. It points others in God's direction, helping them to also find God in true worship. The truth is; our true worship should, without a doubt, showcase Christ Jesus' attributes in us - which are the fruits of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Granted, we cannot do this by our own might, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, it can easily be attained (Philippians 2:13). Let us pray continually and ask God to show us what to do (His work with and through us), when to do it (His appointed time and season), where to do it (His chosen place and space) and above all, how to do it (His godly manner of accomplishing and completing tasks). Jesus Christ relied totally on God and His actions truly brought God glory on earth; so shall it be for us in our total submission to God and faithful obedience to His Word and Christ Jesus' teachings. Amen!

Christ Jesus' advice and encouraging words in the New Testament book of Matthew 11:29 to all of us, urges all Christians to take His yoke upon us and learn from Him, because He is gentle and lowly in heart, and we will all find rest for our souls if we do. Unlike the wooden crosspiece that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plough or cart that they are to pull, Christ assures us that His yoke is easy. Therefore, however heavy the burdens we are carrying today are, Christ will make it light by freeing us of them all. What then is your yoke today? Is it excessive demands of religious teachers, preachers, prophets or leaders? Perhaps it may be extreme tiredness and despair in seeking the Truth, or the search for the Almighty God in a web of lies created by false religious leaders in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting for their selfish gains. Christians, whatever your response is to the above, now more than ever, is the time to take up Christ's offer of rest for our souls - to nurture a lasting personal relationship with God. Let us all learn from Christ's demure and humble nature

and be resolute in the Truth we have heard, read and know; so as to walk uprightly in the path of God's righteousness, in true worship of Him.

**DETERMINE THE WAY FORWARD:** Having now discerned the Facts and discovered the Truth, it is only prudent for ardent followers of Christ to determine in their hearts to run (without looking back and or sneakily peeping into the past) with the whole truth in order to genuinely worship God - with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength - in spirit and in truth.

Interestingly, though we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ Jesus; by way of His death on the Cross, and have been bought back from a life of slavery to sin and wrongdoings, we set aside the very grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the unconditional love of God and the sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit of promise - that we have been sealed with - to revert to the practice of old laws that Christ has perfected, dingy rules and regulations of man-made doctrines that are destructive and detrimental to the soul. With regard to the above mentioned, we inevitably permit and allow our spirits, consciously or subconsciously, to be shackled in bondage.

Today, take a Spirit-filled stand against these blatant malpractices in the Christendom that have hindered, and continue to hinder, innocent Christians from expressing their heartfelt true worship of God. These have furthermore, robbed them of the ability to be spiritually productive and the opportunity of reaching their full potentials in the Christendom and in the Body of Christ. It is also time to denounce these ungodly practices, call out the false preachers and teachers and not do according to their works, refuse to take heed of the advice of smooth-talking teachers, preachers or leaders who use flattery to deceive the minds of Christians while denying the Omnipotence of God. Nevertheless, positively change your attitude of worship and serve Almighty God through Christ Jesus in faith, hoping, as we ought to, for the promise of eternal life with the Trinity.

From now on into eternity, we must determine to take root of the truth earthward in our hearts and bear fruit of the Holy Spirit heavenward, always speaking out what we believe from our knowledge of the Word, as we are commanded. (a) Rebuke in love and with the fear of God, those who preach, teach and encourage Christians to practice falsehood. (b) We must acknowledge our mistakes and ask God to forgive us and show us His way, so we can move past our errors in life with clear

conscience and have the ability to (c) pray for such leaders and churches (that preach, teach and encourage the practice of such falsehood in the Body of Christ) to repent and commit to doing God's true works. In particular, pray;

1. For them to cease self-seeking and lying against the truth in this age, and return to their first love of God, working for God as they ought to; loving God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength - likewise you and I.
2. That their work for God from now on, is to be motivated by their commitment to Christ Jesus and love and fear of God; and not for their bellies, selfish gains or for devilish causes.
3. For them to set their minds on heavenly things, principles and qualities that glorify God; and not on earthly things for their sole benefit and glory.
4. For the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance from where they have fallen; so that they can repent and do the first works out of pure love for God and humankind, so the Body of Christ is edified.

We must remind them and ourselves of the warnings in Revelation. 2:4-5, *“nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”*

And also, in Revelation 21:27, *“But there shall by no means enter it [Heaven] anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.”*

Consequently, we should no longer be babies in Christ, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men and women, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting for their selfish gains. Now is the time to wake up to the truth of true worship of God, knowing that God is not willing that any one of us should perish but that we should all come to repentance (2Peter 3:9-13).

**DETERMINE** within yourself now, with single-minded passion, to put away worthless religion and its practices, and run with the Truth without looking back, if you are to be like Christ Jesus. Acknowledge the Godly truth that, through Christ Jesus, we (all believers) have access to God the Father by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit - nothing more, nothing less - and rest in this heavenly assurance. Walk like Jesus Christ walked on earth and do as He did, in order to fulfil all righteousness. This is the only acceptable



and proper way of expressing your reverence and adoration for God and His principles, that is, the fundamental truth that serves as the foundation of our belief. In true worship of God, ask God whatever you desire in Christ Jesus' name, and it shall be done for you; according to His will for your life.

**Determine henceforth to;**

- (i) Wait patiently for God to move and answer your prayers and/or accede to your requests - believing and trusting Him to supply all your need according to His unlimited/limitless resources in glory by Christ Jesus only.
- (ii) Come to the unity of the faith and in-depth knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ and to the stature of the fullness of Christ to appreciate and respect who you are and the friend you have, in Him.
- (iii) Speak the truth in love and grow up spiritually in all things into the fountainhead, Christ Jesus - and begin to exercise the right and authority (Luke 10:19-20) He has already given you, knowing that you can rest in the blessed assurance that He is always with you wherever you go to the very end of the age.
- (iv) Continually be in true worship of God; rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and in everything (whether good or not so good) giving thanks; knowing that this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- (v) Thank God for all that He has done for you to date. Thank Him for the things He continues to do in your life and those He is yet to do. Thank Him again and again and praise Him.
- (vi) Commit yourself to making the most of your spiritual journey righteously with His mercies and faithfulness - in order to experience as much as you can of Him and the entire blessings He has in store for you - His holistic prosperity, comfort, Christ's power and authority. Amen.

Regardless of your circumstances, from now on into eternity, diligently seek God, putting Him and His righteousness first, in all that you do and face mundanely. Keep your lives free from anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, and be content with only the Gospel TRUTH.

God bless us all. All glory to the Most High God!

## **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

(In line with Psalm 119)

Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end. Give me understanding, so that I may keep Your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of Your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward Your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to Your word. Fulfil Your promise to Your servant, so that You may be feared. Take away the disgrace I dread, for Your laws are good. How I long for Your precepts! In Your righteousness preserve my life. I pray through the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

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